



Ministry of Diaspora Affairs
Creating a common Jewish future

Antisemitism

Annual Report 2020

Trends

Incidents

Situation
Assessment

Submitted to the Government of Israel in Commemoration of
International Holocaust Remembrance Day



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Holocaust Remembrance Day
January 27, 2021

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Letter from the Minister of Diaspora Affairs

This past year, the Covid-19 virus took over the world, changing life as we know it. In addition to bringing about unimaginable challenges, the pandemic exacerbated an ancient and all too familiar plague – antisemitism. Throughout history, the Jewish people have served as an easy scapegoat for the world's illnesses. In the middle ages, Jews were cruelly accused of poisoning wells and bringing about the Black Death; American Jews in the late nineteenth century were charged with spreading typhus and cholera; and the Nazis based their deplorable actions on the twisted theory that Jews were a biological threat to the Aryan race.

As such, it is no surprise that antisemitic sentiment spread in conjunction with the pandemic. Emerging conspiracy theories ranged from accusation of Jews deliberately coughing to spread Covid-19, to the State of Israel refusing to vaccinate Arab Israeli citizens, to the idea that Jews created the novel virus as some absurd plot for financial gain. While this phenomenon is not new, these lies -- propagated on social media -- are dangerous and highly concerning. This report will examine these conspiracy theories among other emerging trends.

On a somewhat positive note, it should be noted that there were no fatal antisemitic attacks this year. However, this should not be understood to reflect a downward trend in antisemitism. Rather, due to the pandemic, Jewish community centers, synagogues, schools, and stores, which have served as previous targets, were largely shuttered. Jews, and for that matter antisemites, spent little time in public spaces in 2020. Instead, mirroring global develops, antisemitism further shifted online.

The internet has become the central platform for the dissemination of antisemitism. Therefore, our response must also focus on the digital sphere. In fact, alongside our monitoring center, which provides comprehensive top-down reports on current antisemitic activity, the Ministry has made significant strides this year in combatting online antisemitism. We focused our efforts by working with major social media networks including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Amazon. We hold that just as countries must combat antisemitism within their borders, so too are technology giants responsible for stamping out antisemitic hate speech from their platforms.

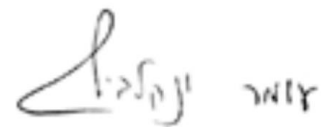
Another concerning development this year has been the undermining of basic Jewish religious freedoms in Europe. The recent ruling by the European Court of Justice permitting countries to ban kosher slaughter is a particularly blatant example of this trend. It must be made clear that anybody claiming to stand against antisemitism must also safeguard fundamental practices of Judaism. Both the physical and religious life of Jewish communities must be protected to ensure the continued vitality of world Jewry. The State of Israel will do all in its power to combat this phenomenon and guarantee the religious freedoms of Jewish communities around the world.

We are also witnessing a welcome progression in many countries' and organizations' efforts to combat antisemitism. There has been a positive movement of countries adopting the IHRA

Definition of Antisemitism and appointing special envoys to specifically tackle this issue. As antisemitism is an international challenge and responsibility, it must be eradicated through a united global effort. It is our role to lead this combined coalition of countries, bodies, and organizations in order to accurately pinpoint and uproot antisemitic activity wherever it emerges. This year has also provided historic new opportunities for collaboration. The Abraham Accords inspire and require us to expand this coalition to include Arab and Muslim majority countries.

To conclude, the Psalmist's teaching of "depart from evil and do good" can guide our ongoing combined approach to combat antisemitism. On one hand, we must remain committed to monitoring and targeting antisemitic incidents in physical and online spaces. On the other hand, we must invest in education and promote tolerance within the Jewish community and around the world. What is certain is that when antisemitism rears its ugly head, the State of Israel will not be silent. Together, we will continue our united and dedicated effort until we ultimately eliminate the virus of antisemitism from our world.

Minister of Diaspora Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Omer Yankelevitch' in Hebrew script.

Omer Yankelevitch

Executive Summary

Esteemed readers,

The following is a report that summarizes the principal events, trends, and developments in antisemitism for 2020 based on the data currently available.

The most encouraging statistic this year was that for the first time in a number of years, there were no casualties that resulted from antisemitic attacks in the diaspora. However, this does not mean the attacks have ceased; only that some of them were foiled, and that those which were carried out resulted in injuries which at times were severe.

In general, we can note the continuation of trends observed in recent years: the extreme right and Islamic extremism continue to constitute the most serious and immediate threat to Jewish communities around the world. At the same time, a large portion of Jewish communities also see the extreme left as growing risk factor, albeit of lesser severity.

The Covid-19 epidemic was the most prominent factor behind antisemitic trends in 2020. On the one hand, the repeated lockdowns seem to have lowered physical friction between different populations and the implications of the pandemic on every aspect of life dominated the agenda, pushing other topics, such as the migration crisis which dominates the extreme right's agenda, off to the side; resulting in a lower number of physical antisemitic attacks this year. While on the other hand, online antisemitic activity evolved and grew; setting new precedents for online hate speech enrollment and distribution. At the very beginning of the pandemic's outbreak, our monitoring center identified attempts by known antisemitic advocates to draw a connection between Jews and Israel to various aspects of the pandemic. At first, these attempts were limited to clusters of antisemitic activists. As the crisis deepened, the frequency and volume of these libels rose and reached its peak during what appears to have been an orchestrated Iranian campaign that reached millions of Twitter users and compared the state of Israel to the coronavirus. Simultaneously, we identified a massive increase in consumption of conspiracy theories claiming that Jews sought to profit from the virus from the pharmaceutical industry, that Jews were disproportionately responsible for spreading the virus, or that Jews are using the virus to create a New World Order that will tighten their grasp over world economies. Anti-vaxxers wore yellow stars in demonstrations and posted them to their social media profiles; comparing coronavirus restrictions to the Nazi restrictions placed against Jews during the Holocaust while claiming they were being led to the vaccine "like sheep to the slaughter."

The reaction from social media platforms to the phenomenon of online hate speech during the pandemic was partial and insufficient, and suffered from a lack of transparency and deterrence. Action came only after unprecedented public and political outcry from governments and NGOs, and still the reaction was partial. Facebook and Google announced they would ban content that denies the Holocaust and would close the accounts of convicted antisemites. The move targeted

antisemitic accounts that have been active for years with hundreds of thousands of followers and decreased the appearance of classic antisemitism on those platforms. Twitter did not adopt such a policy and although it removes some antisemitic content, it still allows public figures such as the Iranian Supreme Leader, Khamenei, to spread antisemitism, Holocaust denial, and conspiracy theories on its platform, and refuses to close channels of convicted antisemites. On instant messaging platforms or boards the situation is even worse: far-right activists, pushed out of the mainstream platforms, have joined these alternative networks in mass numbers; creating a toxic environment in which they continue to incite violence without intervention.

In the United States, against the backdrop of political and social division, extreme groups gained prominence. The large Jewish community is awakening to a reality that more closely resembles the situation in Europe. Nine out of ten American Jews think that antisemitism is a problem in the United States, and eight out of every ten think it has increased in the last five years. White supremacists, defined by Homeland Security as “a persistent and lethal threat,” represent the most serious danger to American Jews. Alongside this threat, there is “street bullying” antisemitism that targets visibly identifiable Jews based on their appearance—making ultra-Orthodox Jews the primary target, Muslim antisemitism propagated by both the Nation of Islam, which spreads antisemitism alongside the theory of Black superiority, extreme religious preachers stemming from the Middle East, and left-wing antisemitism which correlates with new antisemitism and is influenced by the “intersectionality theory,” which connects phenomena such as the killing of George Floyd with the State of Israel. Without intervention in the coming year, social tensions can be expected to continue to pose a serious threat. Right-wing extremists will persist in depicting Jews as part of the social elite who promote a social and political order opposed to theirs. At the same time, radical left-wing movements will likely continue to see Jews as a privileged minority that does not belong to their political camp due to their socio-economic status and their connection with the State of Israel.

In western Europe, for the first time in decades, there is an institutional threat to Jewish life: in the name of animal rights and reducing animal suffering, the European Court of Justice has enabled its member states to demand the stunning of animals before ritual slaughter (Jewish or Muslim) while continuing to allow hunting. This severe restriction, and the fear of further constraints of this kind, such as the prohibition of circumcision, do not bode well for the future of Jews in Europe regardless of whether such prohibitions are officially legislated, the very discourse regarding such topics and the decision taken by the supreme court, socially stigmatizes Jewish practices as backwards and cruel, and harms the fabric of Jewish life in the Diaspora.

In France, radical Islam continues to constitute a major threat. The events surrounding the murder of school teacher Samuel Paty, and the heightened level of security Jewish communities have been placed under as a result, demonstrates how exposed the French Jewish community is to threats of Islamic extremism even when the matter at hand has no direct relevance to the Jewish community.

In Britain, a report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission justified the sense of discrimination and frustration felt by many Jewish members and voters of the Labour Party. The

report found that under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, the Labour Party was guilty of three violations of the Equality Act and fostered "a culture within the Party which, at best, did not do enough to prevent antisemitism and, at worst, could be seen to accept it." Though Corbyn was subsequently suspended from the Labour Party following the report's publication, he has lamentably been readmitted.

Germany will be celebrating 1,700 years of Jewish life in the country this year. Yet despite the festivities, the threat posed to the German Jewish community by the extreme-right and radical Islamism continues to grow. In addition, there is a growing trend in German public opinion calling to put an expiration date to the moral debt owed to the Jews and the State of Israel. Among the right-wing scene, this trend is characterized by a trivialization of the Holocaust and a longing for the past combined with the sentiment of "being fed up" of making amends for the Holocaust. Among left-wing circles, this trend is characterized mainly by the call to repeal the decision to adapt the IHRA definition for antisemitism.

In Eastern Europe, the attempts to strengthen national sentiment, noted in previous years, continues. This process often involves historical revisionism and the commending of local patriots who were involved in the persecution and murder of Jews, both before and during the Holocaust. In addition, other attempts are being made to reframe national history and shift the blame for the persecution of Jews onto the victims, who are depicted as "supporters or executors of Communism," or blamed for "supporting the Nazi war machine" by working as forced slave labor. Nonetheless, this year there were successful attempts by authorities to prevent the dissemination of conspiracy theories online connecting Jews and the coronavirus, and potentially volatile events were treated with sensitivity which prevented possible escalation.

Alongside these events, there were many accomplishments this year in the struggle against antisemitism. Some of the most prominent among them was the continued ratification of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism as the international standard for defining the phenomenon worldwide. Three states with Muslim majority populations also adopted the definition. Among them, for the first time, was also an Arab country, Bahrain. In Morocco, a new curriculum for primary schools has been launched which includes chapters about the history of Jews in Morocco and Moroccan-Jewish culture. In the United States, the position of Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combatting Antisemitism was promoted to that equivalent of an ambassador. Other countries, among them Holland and Canada, also decided to appoint special envoys to combat antisemitism, while the European Union decided to include the struggle against antisemitism as part of the Union's core policies.

To sum up, 2020 was an anomaly in Antisemitic trends. At the time of writing, it is not yet clear how the vaccination project will be carried out and how fast and effective the recovery process will be. If the process becomes protracted, there is reason to fear this will deepen the political and economic crisis and further exacerbate existing social divisions while strengthening radical and populist

elements from across the political spectrum. These groups will likely once more try to blame their own shortcomings on a global conspiracy or some demonic “other.”

These matters, and more, are analyzed in greater detail in the report you find before you.

Finally, I would like to thank those who contributed to this year’s report: the Sayiqan team, Chairman Dr. Haim Assa, CEO Brigadier General (Res.) Shir Oz, Chief Analyst Johanna Mamane, Dr. Susanne Cohen-Weisz, Maya Levy-David, Maaty Frenkelzon, Jonatan Bijman, Dr. Ronen Zeidel, and Yarden Keren. Nativ - Prime Minister’s Office, the Kantor Center and its head, Prof. Dina Porat, and a special thanks to the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs: Minister Omer Yankelovich, CEO Dvir Kahana, Sarith Lap and to all those who have worked tirelessly in order to ensure thriving Jewish life in the diaspora.

Sincerely,

Yogev Karasenty

Director for Combatting Antisemitism

Ministry of Diaspora Affairs

Countries that Adopted the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism





Most Significant Events in 2020

- The Covid-19 virus outbreak ignited a worldwide wave of accusations and antisemitic conspiracy theories against Jews. Throughout the year, Covid-19 deniers and vaccine opposers around the world claimed that the limitations subjected on them are equal to those Jews were subjected to during the Holocaust, and that they are being led to the vaccine like sheep to the slaughter.
- **January:** United States Attorney General William Barr issued a directive to all U.S. attorneys directing them to initiate or reestablish contacts with the Jewish community in their respective districts to reassure the Jewish community of the Department of Justice's commitment to protecting Jewish citizens. The memo directed the United States Attorneys to establish a point of contact in each of their offices for the Jewish community to report hate crimes or other discrimination.¹
- **January:** President Donald Trump signs bill authorizing \$375 million in grants for security protection against violence committed against houses of worship.² New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced \$45 million in additional funding will go to protect New York's religious-based institutions, including non-public schools and cultural centers.³
- **May:** President Donald Trump signed into law H.R. 943, the Never Again Education Act, which directs the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to develop and disseminate resources to promote a better understanding of the Holocaust and authorizes Holocaust education programs to engage teachers and educational leaders.⁴
- **May:** Special envoy Elan Carr announces the U.S. government is working to combat antisemitism linked to the spread of the Coronavirus.⁵
- **June:** In Germany, as a consequence of the Yom Kippur terror attack in Halle, the Saxony-Anhalt State Chancellery announced it would provide €890,000 in 2020 and €1,535,000 in 2021 to strengthen the protection of synagogues and Jewish community facilities.
- **August:** German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier takes over the patronage of the 2021 festival year celebrating 1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany. The festivities during that year are being organized by the association "321-2021: 1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany," which was established especially for this purpose and aims at making Jewish life tangible and at taking a stand against increasing antisemitism.
- **September:** The German Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Central Council of Jews in Germany signed an agreement allocating €22 million for structural protective measures.
- **September:** The German police suspends dozens of police officers who participated in an online Antisemitic and racist chat group. This group was preceded by other groups of law enforcement personnel, who performed similar offences.

¹ <https://bit.ly/3gJznwr>.

² <https://bit.ly/34ci7ea>.

³ <https://on.ny.gov/3mkfxc2>.

⁴ <https://bit.ly/3qMX0sx>.

⁵ <https://bit.ly/37fLQEQ>.

- **October:** The United Kingdom's Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) official report found the Labour party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, was responsible for illegal discrimination and harassment of Jewish party members. "We have identified serious failings in leadership during the period the investigation looked at, and an inadequate process for handling antisemitism complaints across the Labour Party." The committee identified three breaches of the Equality Act: political interference in antisemitism complaints, failure to provide adequate training to those handling antisemitism complaints, and Antisemitic harassment. Following the report, the Labour party suspended Corbyn from the party, but he was readmitted as a party member shortly after that.
- **October:** Bahrain became the first Arab country to adopt the working definition of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, IHRA.⁶
- **December:** The European Court of Justice, EU's highest court, backed a Flemish decision to require the use of stunning for livestock, contradictory to the Jewish Kosher and Muslim Halal slaughter. The court ruling stated it took animal rights into account. However, at the same time as the Court decision demands the stunning of animals before kosher slaughter, it allows hunting. This severe restriction does not bode well for the future of the Jewish community in Belgium and Europe.
- **December:** Oxford University adopts the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.
- **December:** The European Union decided to include the fight against antisemitism across the entirety of the Union's policy areas, calling antisemitism "an attack on European values," and stated that "antisemitism, intolerance, or racial hate" do not comply with the European way of life, while calling "for much needed decisive actions." The declaration also states that "member states have a duty to ensure the security of Jewish communities and institutions." The declaration recognizes, with great concern, "the rise in threats towards Jewish people - both online and offline;" especially regarding the Covid-19 outbreaks.
- **December:** The United States Senate passed a bill elevating the position of Special Envoy to Antisemitism to that of Ambassador.

⁶ <https://bit.ly/37egGO8>.

SECTION I

ONLINE ANTISEMITISM

Main Trends of 2020

1

Antisemitism on Social Media in 2020: An Analysis of the ACMS

In 2015, the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs began mapping the phenomenon of antisemitism, and identified an unsettling reality: the internet, and particularly social networks, were being used as central platforms to spread antisemitism and forge connections between extremists. Moreover, online hate speech was not systematically monitored on a large scale.

As a result, the Ministry took several steps to address this reality. In 2017, the Antisemitic Cyber Monitoring System (ACMS) was created to detect and analyze antisemitic discourse on social networks. This unique system—the most advanced of its kind in the world—is based on the analysis of written texts using artificial intelligence and semantic analysis technologies. ACMS operates in accordance with the IHRA working definition of antisemitism to analyze, quantify, categorize, and localize online antisemitic content; both in real time and automatically. It can be used on a wide variety of social networks and in numerous languages.

By making clear the extent and nature of online antisemitism, the Ministry's team has been able to successfully prompt governments, international organizations, and internet platforms to better regulate online hate speech. In 2019, various states began initiating legislation and regulation impacting online hate speech. As a result, the number of networks that monitored antisemitic discourse on their platforms rose.

These efforts resulted in the migration of many extremists, primarily from the far-right, to alternative social media platforms. It should be noted that the ACMS detected a reduction of users from mainstream social media platforms. In response to this trend, the ACMS began monitoring several leading alternative networks, among them 4Chan, BitChute, 8Kun, Stormfront, Gab, and Minds. Throughout the past year, additional languages (Russian and Spanish) have been added to the system, in addition to the four original languages monitored (English, French, German, and Arabic).

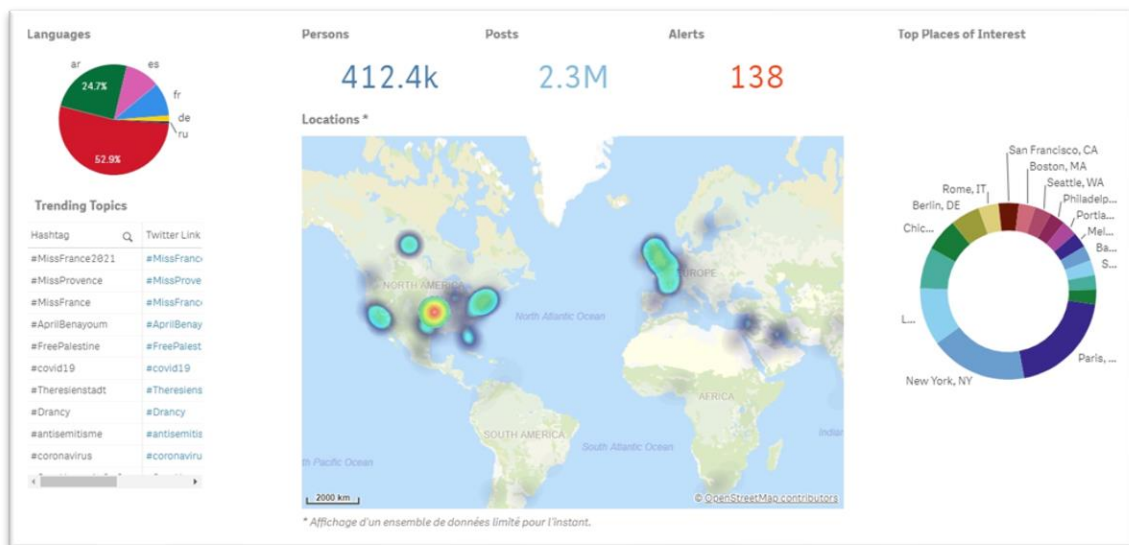
The Ministry of Diaspora Affairs has established a research and information center, which at its core, relies on the ACMS system and its analysts. New technologies and research methods are currently being developed that will enable advanced research into antisemitic phenomena with the aim of strengthening and improving our ability to combat antisemitism and those who support it.

ANTISEMITISM 2.0 IN THE AGE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Historically, times of crisis have created fertile ground for extremism, radicalization, and violence. The Covid-19 outbreak is no exception. In fact, the pandemic has been used to disseminate racism, xenophobia, and antisemitism; along with an epidemic of online misinformation spread alongside conspiracy theories blaming Chinese, 5G antennas, laboratories, big pharma, and Jews for the spread of the new virus. Indeed, Jews, who were accused in medieval times of poisoning wells to spread the plague have once again become the scapegoat for the pandemic, except this time in the digital age. This chapter will analyze trends in antisemitic hate speech online in the age of the Covid-19 pandemic.

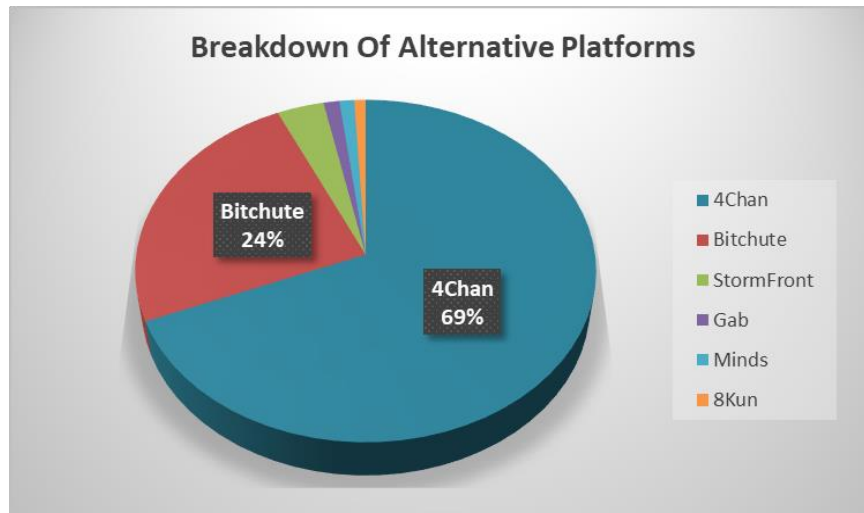
1. The Global Trends of 2020

- Between January 1 and December 31, 2020, ACMS recorded 2.3 million antisemitic posts written by nearly 413K users in English, French, Arabic, German, Spanish, and Russian on Twitter, 4Chan, BitChute, Stormfront, Gab, Minds, and 8Kun. When breaking down the figures according to languages, 52.9% of the antisemitic messages were posted in English, 24.7% in Arabic, 10.3% in Spanish, 9.7% in French, 1.8% in German, and 0.5% in Russian.



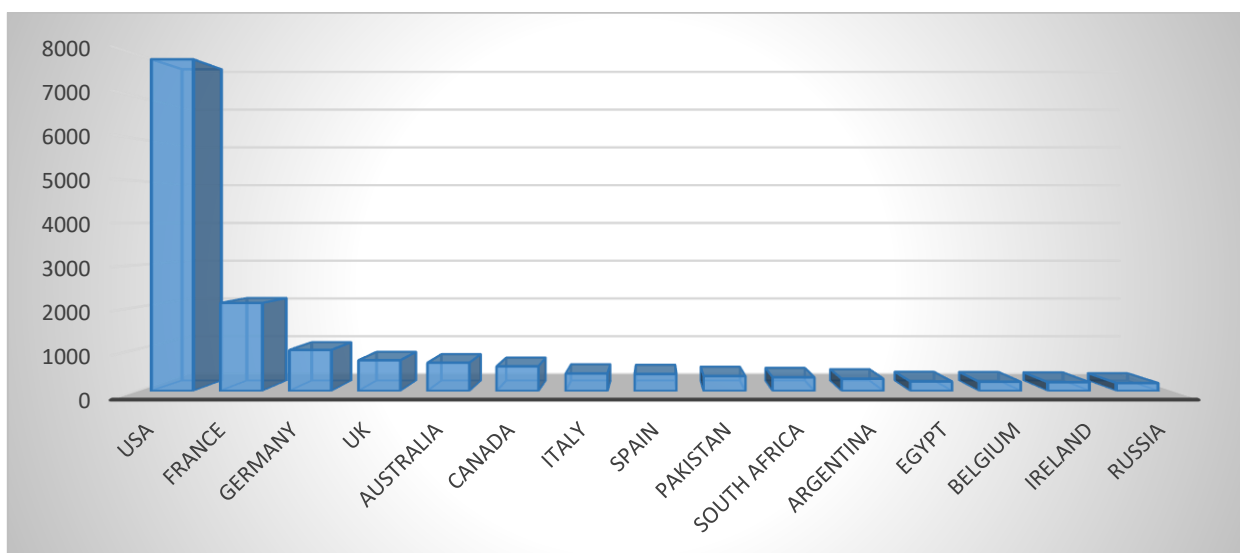
Dashboard – Online Antisemitism, 2020 (Source: ACMS)

- When examining the figures by platforms, 94.5% of the antisemitic messages were posted on Twitter (2.17M), and 5.5% on alternative Social networks (127K). Within the alternative platform's ecosystem, 4chan was overrepresented with 69% of the messages recorded, followed by BitChute (24%).



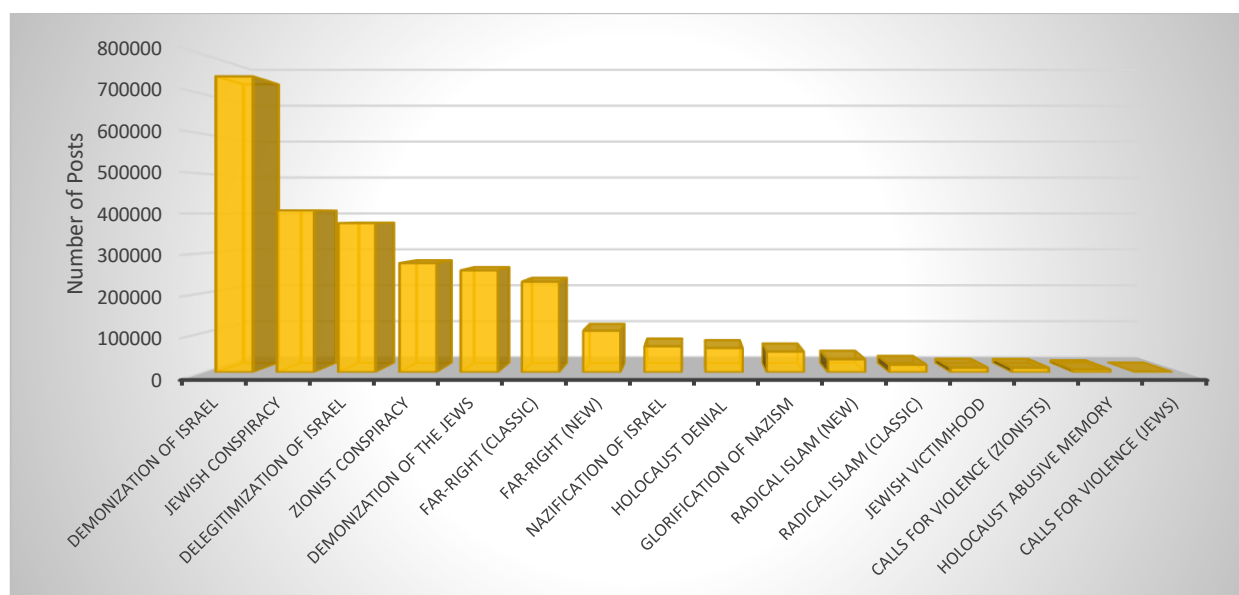
Breakdown of antisemitic discourse by alternative social media platforms, 2020 (Source: ACMS)

- ACMS identified Paris as the city with the highest number of individuals who disseminated antisemitic hate speech in 2020, followed by New York, Los Angeles, and Washington. By country, the USA ranks first by far, followed by France, Germany, and the UK.



Top countries according to the number of users who posted antisemitic content in 2020 (Source: ACMS)

- Data analysis by categories shows that *New Antisemitism* constitutes 63.4% of the global antisemitic discourse in 2020, *Classic Antisemitism* makes up 30.1%, while *Holocaust Denial & Distortion* consists of 6.5%. It should be noted that the category of *New Antisemitism* includes some form of vitriols against Israel (as framed by the IHRA working definition of antisemitism), and against 'Zionism' where Zionism is conceived as an equivalent to the centuries-old antisemitic "International Jewry" trope. When examining data by discourse subcategories, *Demonization of Israel* constitutes the most prevalent type of antisemitic discourse in 2020, followed by *Jewish Conspiracy*, *Delegitimization of Israel*, and *Zionist Conspiracy*.



Breakdown of antisemitic discourse by subcategories, 2020 (Source: ACMS)

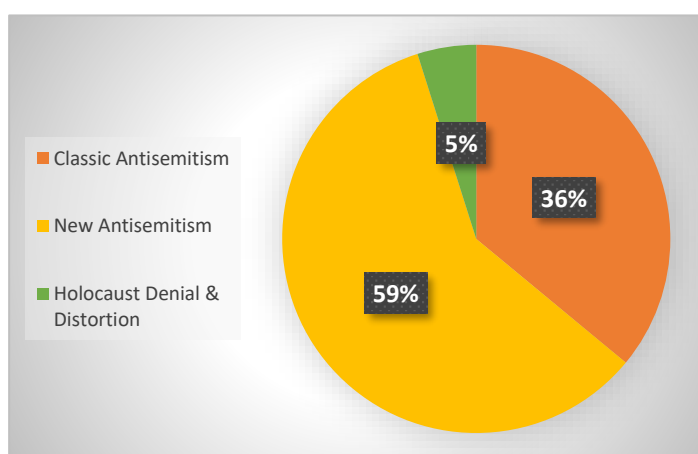
2. An Analysis of Coronavirus-Related Antisemitic Discourse

2.1 General Trends

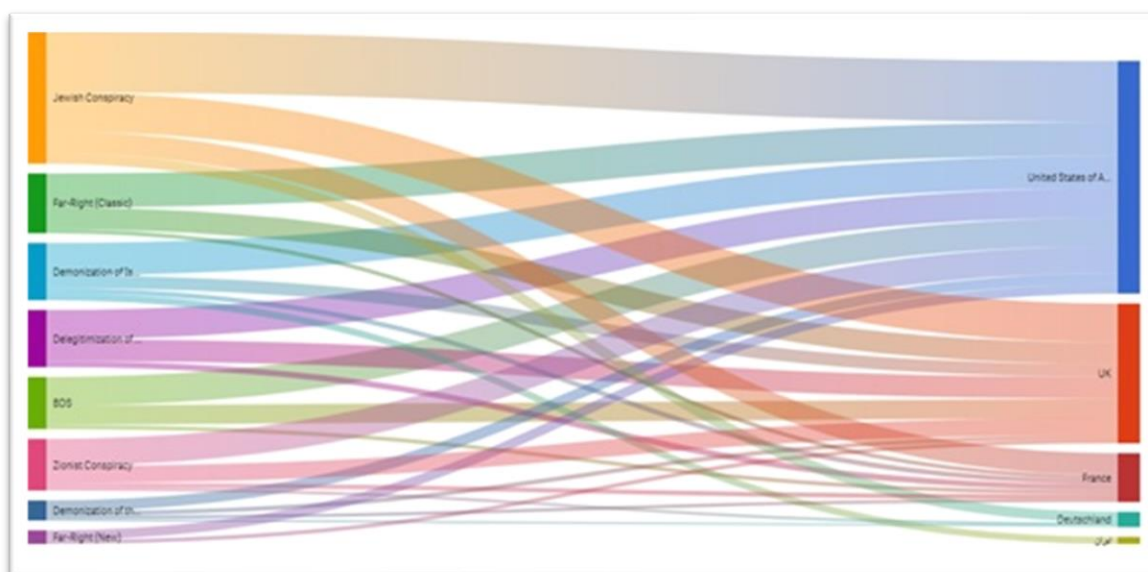
Out of the total number of antisemitic posts recorded in 2020 (2.3M), more than 50K referred to the Covid-19 pandemic (2.2%), and 63% of this content was posted in English. The highest concentration of users disseminating virus-related antisemitic tropes has been localized in New York, followed by Paris, Los Angeles, Berlin, and Washington.

2.2 Discourse Classification & Typology

New Antisemitism makes up 59% of Coronavirus-related antisemitic messages, while *Classic Antisemitism* constitutes 36% and *Holocaust Denial and Distortion* consists of 5%. This indicates that the state of Israel remains an irrational object of obsession within the psyche of people holding antisemitic views, even in times of global pandemic. When breaking down according to subcategories, the majority of the antisemitic content referring to the pandemic is classified as conspiracy theories. Furthermore, a significant proportion of antisemitic posts display sentiments classified as far-right but also as delegitimization and demonization of Israel, and pro-BDS.



Breakdown of antisemitic discourse referring to the Covid-19 pandemic by main categories (Source: ACMS)



Breakdown of Subcategory discourse referring to the Covid-19 pandemic by Country, 2020 (Source: ACMS)

- ACMS indicates that extremist groups across the ideological spectrum are capitalizing on the uncertainty created by the pandemic to scapegoat Jews. This threat emanates mostly from the far-right, radical left, and Islamist fringes; the three segments of the general population which hold the highest level of antisemitic prejudices. The European Union’s counter-terrorism chief Gilles de Kerchove corroborates this data, warning that the coronavirus pandemic is fueling extremism on the far-right and far-left in Europe and giving the Islamic State and other militants cover to regain influence.⁷ Furthermore, antisemitism unites radicals from different sides of the ideological spectrum—groups that are often fundamentally opposed to each other—who intersect and find points of convergence against Jews and Israel.

2.3 Discourse Analysis of Antisemitic Content Referring to Covid-19

Conspiracy Theories Disseminated on Social Media

The outburst of the Covid-19 pandemic has led to the proliferation of antisemitic conspiracy theories, including the revival of medieval blood libels rebranded and recycled into contemporary forms of antisemitism. Jews, Zionists, and Israel are accused of having created, spread, financed, and used the virus to expand their global domination, impose a New World Order, but also as a means for profit. Some also allege that the virus is a bioweapon funded by Jewish philanthropist George Soros. Former French Health Minister Agnès Buzyn and her husband Yves Levy were targeted in a wave of antisemitic messages and accused by antisemitic activists of lobbying against the official approval of the Hydroxychloroquine⁸ for financial matters.

⁷ <http://reut.rs/3mHmkNf>.

⁸ The Hydroxychloroquine is a controversial drug treatment advocated by Professor Didier Raoult.



Antisemitic caricature reviving medieval blood libel, depicting Agnès Buzyn poisoning wells (Twitter Screenshot.⁹)

Demonization and Delegitimization of Israel: The Virus Metaphor



Twitter screenshots.¹⁰

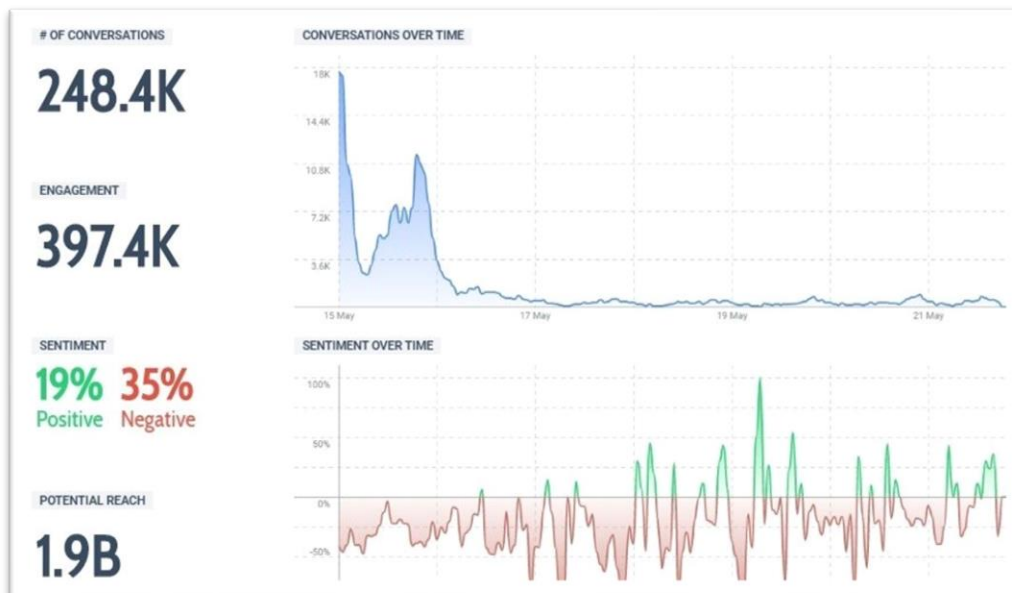
The virus metaphor has been widely used to disseminate radical anti-Zionist sentiments, including the characterization of Israel as Covid-19. It echoes the antisemitic “Jewish parasite” stereotype which served to legitimize the persecution of Jews by the Nazis. The hashtags #Covid48¹¹ and #Covid1948, equating the State of Israel and the coronavirus, had indeed gained great popularity on Twitter.

⁹ <http://bit.ly/3mAwsqV>

¹⁰ <https://bit.ly/3riKotn>.
<https://bit.ly/2KQ24vO>.

¹¹ #Covid48 and #Covid1948 are a contraction of Covid-19 and 1948, a reference to the Israeli declaration of independence (May 14, 1948)

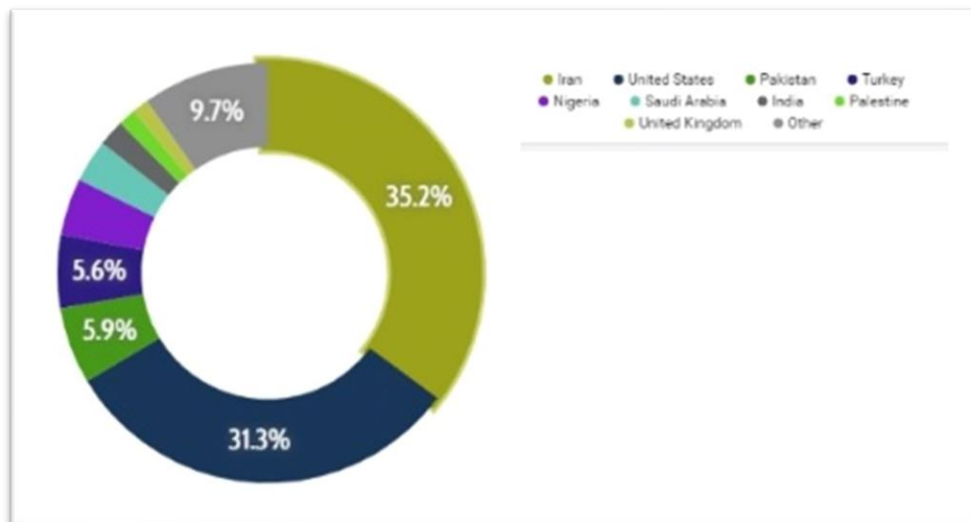
- During the third week of April 2020 that marked both Holocaust Remembrance Day (April 20-21) and Palestinian Prisoner's Day (April 17th), several antisemitic online vitriol linked Israel to the coronavirus using the hashtag #Covid48. Research suggests that the #Covid48 online campaign originated from a Facebook event to mark Palestinian Prisoner's Day and coordinated by a group called "The Children of the Refugee Camps–The Jordanian Group." "Of roughly 1,000 Tweets sampled over a 15-hour period, #Covid48 had a reach of over 500,000 accounts with an impression count of over 1 million, with its largest impression bases in the US and Jordan," research noted.¹²
- Furthermore, a similar campaign promoting the hashtag #Covid1948 started on May 14th to mark the Nakba. #Covid1948 was mentioned almost 250,000 times between May 15th and May 17th on Twitter. Of these tweets, 44% referencing #Covid1948 were written in Persian, 35% were written in English, and 8% were posted in Arabic (see images below). Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei also used Twitter to compare Israel to the Coronavirus using the hashtag #Covid1948.¹³



Hashtag '#Covid1948' mentions on Twitter – (Source: Talkwalker)

¹² <https://bit.ly/3azeZNs>.

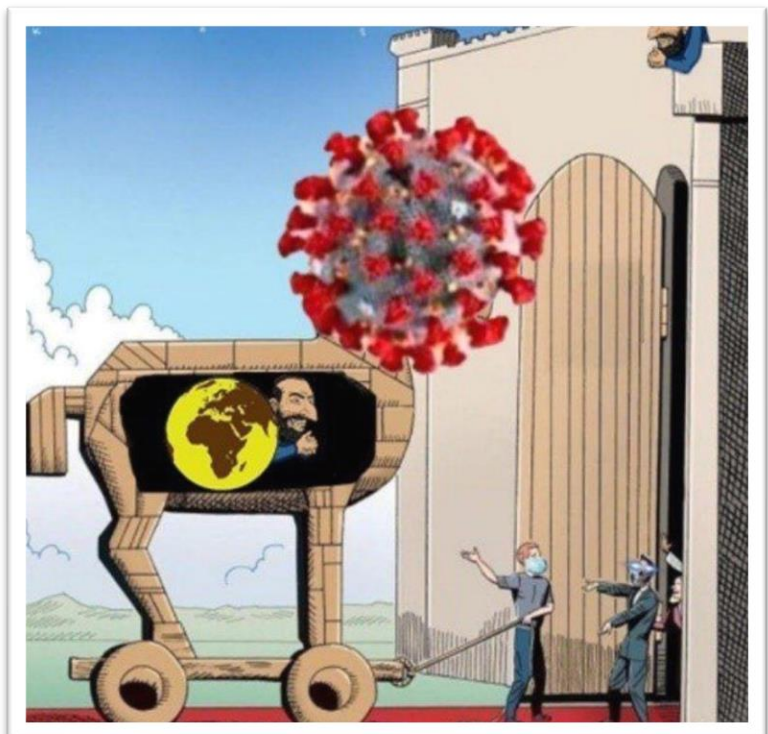
¹³ Khamenei, 2020. Twitter: <https://bit.ly/3ochOqR>.



Hashtag '#Covid1948' mentions on Twitter – Share of Countries (Source: Talkwalker)

Extreme Right-Wing Online Activism Scapegoating Jews

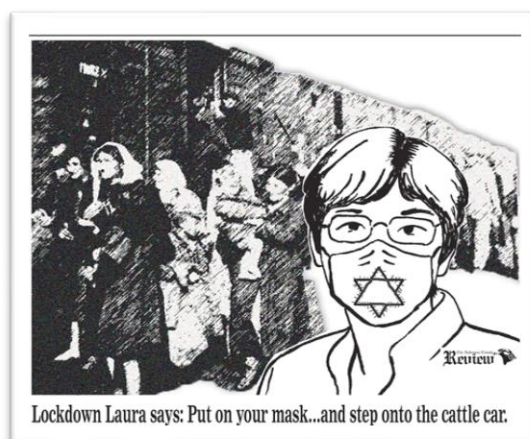
The pandemic appears as another demonstration of the extent of online activism emanating from ultra-nationalist circles. Indeed, ACMS shows that far-right activists and white supremacists are using the coronavirus pandemic to spread antisemitic rhetoric and conspiracy theories. The most prevalent libel spread by those communities claim that “Globalist Jews” created the virus to impose a New World Order. A significant number of posts assert that Jewish billionaires Georges Soros and the Rothschild family are behind the virus outbreak as a part of their plan to advance the “Great Replacement” of the white European population. The “Kalgari Plan” and the “White Genocide” conspiracy theories, which state there is a deliberate plot orchestrated by Jews and liberal elites to extinguish the white race through mass immigration and multiculturalism, are also mentioned. Moreover, reports warned that far-right groups have been sending out messages online encouraging supporters to go out and infect “enemies.”



In this image shared on Telegram on March 15, the coronavirus is presented as a trojan horse for “globalist” Jews. (photo credit: ADL/COURTESY - <http://bit.ly/2Jb73GT>)

Holocaust Trivialization

The Coronavirus pandemic also led to the use of a terminology that associates it with the Holocaust online and offline. Indeed, anti-coronavirus restrictions have been widely compared to policies of the Nazi regime, a phenomenon mostly notable in the US¹⁴ and Germany.¹⁵ Anti-lockdown protesters were seen on numerous occasions wearing yellow stars while anti-vaccination demonstrators suggested that those who have not been vaccinated are equivalent to Jews persecuted in Nazi Germany.



Source: Amichai Stein Twitter Account - Screenshot

3. Insights

The Internet plays a major role in the proliferation of all forms of hatreds and generates real-world violence. The spread of conspiracy theories on the web seeking a scapegoat for the virus outbreak puts Jewish communities at risk. As History has repeatedly proven, times of crisis offer fertile ground for antisemitism, and the great economic depression the world will face could lead to a significant surge in general criminality, radicalization, and hate crimes against Jews. Hence, the imperative need to confront online hate speech.

ACMS ANALYSIS — ENGLISH

1. General Trends

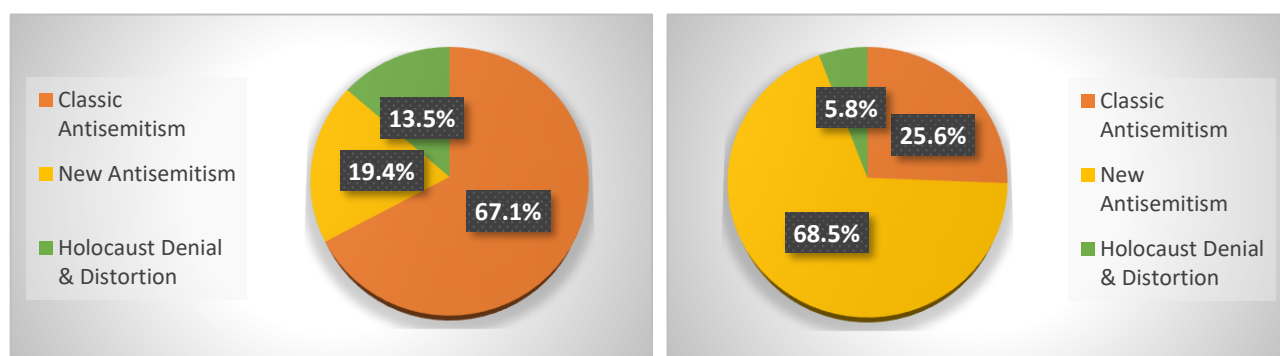
In 2020, a total of 1.07 million English posts, written by 130.2 thousand users, were categorized as antisemitic by the ACMS. When analyzing the antisemitic discourse on mainstream platforms such as Twitter, New Antisemitism accounted for 68.5% of antisemitic discourse, Classic Antisemitism accounted for 25.7%, and Holocaust Denial and Distortion accounted for 5.8%. When comparing these figures to last year, New Antisemitism rose slightly while both Classic Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial and Distortion decreased slightly for the second year in a row. Additionally, the top five sub-categories of antisemitic discussion throughout 2020 were the Demonization of Israel, Delegitimization of Israel, BDS, Jewish Conspiracy, and Zionist Conspiracy. Likewise, the top

¹⁴ <http://bit.ly/3nEP0rn>

¹⁵ <http://bit.ly/2J982qU>

antisemitic cities according to the numbers of posts and users have stayed the same over the last three years; with New York, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and Chicago ranking first through fourth place. This correlates with findings by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, which examined hate-crime reports from 2019 in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., and found that all four cities experienced decade highs.¹⁶ When looking at the top countries as they relate to English antisemitism online, they are respectively the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, India, and Canada. As a whole, antisemitic posts written in English in 2020 accounted for 50.4% of all antisemitic discourse within ACMS.

ACMS has recently begun analyzing antisemitic discourse on alternative and unregulated platforms such as 4Chan, BitChute, or 8Kun, and reveals that the distribution of the discourse is completely different from what is seen on mainstream platforms such as Twitter. Classic Antisemitism in English on these platforms accounts for 67.1% of the discourse, while New Antisemitism accounts for 19.4% and Holocaust Denial and Distortion accounts for 13.5% (see charts below). We believe many users have migrated from mainstream platforms to unregulated platforms and that this is one of the leading causes for why the shift in discourse is so strong. Furthermore, this decline is also a reflection of the recent enforcement of stricter policy guidelines on mainstream social media platforms.



Pie Chart on Left: Distribution of antisemitic discourse on unregulated platforms.

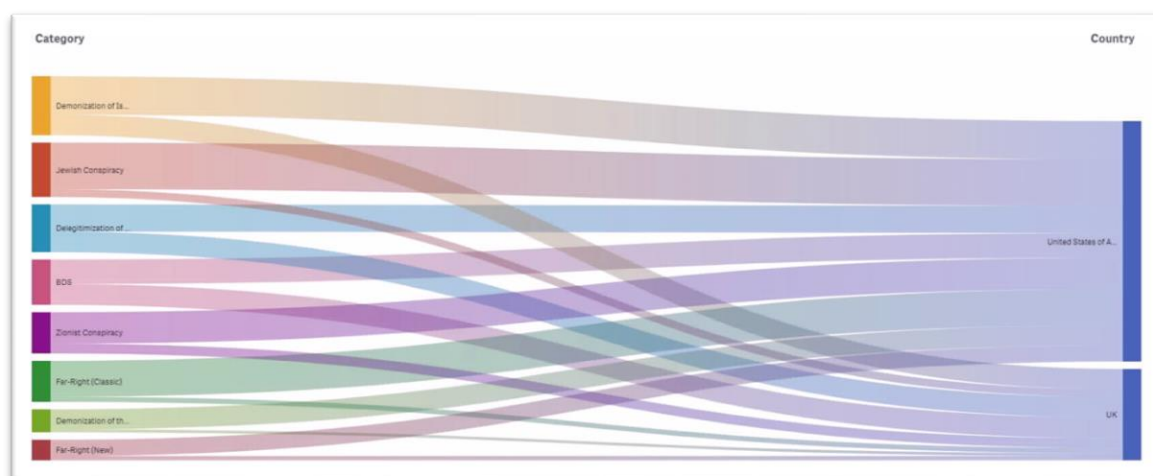
Pie Chart on Right: Distribution of antisemitic discourse on mainstream platforms.

2. Analysis of the Data and Discourse

A closer look at the English antisemitic discourse analyzed by ACMS shows that New Antisemitism was overwhelmingly prevalent among mainstream social media users in 2020. Though cultural differences somewhat affected the online trends in antisemitic discussion when examining discourse emanating from the United States and United Kingdom, which are the two leading countries of English antisemitic discourse, antisemitism surrounding Israel was still the most popular topic in both countries. When conducting a drill-down analysis, it is evident that this year online antisemitic discourse in English was greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which had a massive impact on antisemitic conspiracy theories both Classic and New. In addition to this, over the past

¹⁶ Adeel Hassan, "Hate-Crime Violence Hits 16-Year High, F.B.I. Reports," New York Times, November 12, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/12/us/hate-crimes-fbi-report.html>.

year both countries experienced their own societal tribulations and the results of this are evident in the antisemitic discourse analyzed by ACMS.



The diagram shows the distribution of the top sub-categories of antisemitic discourse to the US and UK, respectively. They are: Demonization of Israel, Jewish Conspiracy, Delegitimization of Israel, BDS, Zionist Conspiracy, Far-Right (Classic), Demonization of the Jews.

3. The United States

There is no doubt the US has been undergoing a serious internal struggle with racism and hate speech on a national scale over the past few years. In this context, the discussion this year was heavily influenced by both the Covid-19 pandemic and the spread of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement protests following the death of George Floyd. According to ACMS, antisemitic discourse in English emanating from the United States on mainstream social media platforms contained mostly New Antisemitism (58.6%), followed by Classic Antisemitism (34.7%) and Holocaust Denial and Distortion (6.7%). The top sub-categories of antisemitic discussion were Jewish Conspiracy, Demonization of Israel, Zionist Conspiracy, Far-Right (Classic Antisemitism), and Delegitimization of Israel. However, when examining the main categories of antisemitic discussion on unregulated platforms, they present a totally different reality than what is seen on mainstream platforms. On unregulated platforms, ACMS categorized the majority of the discourse as Classic Antisemitism (66.2%), followed by New Antisemitism (21.5%) and Holocaust Denial and Distortion (12.4%).

As in previous years, the data suggests that shifts, trends, and spikes in antisemitic discourse directly stemmed from real-world instances. For example, ACMS shows that the large amount of New Antisemitism includes discourse containing the demonization of Israel and antisemitic coronavirus conspiracy theories regarding Israel. These include comparing Israel to the coronavirus or claims that Israel is in fact the “real” virus, or conspiracies that assert Israeli soldiers infected with Covid-19 practice a “tactic” of spitting on Palestinians in order to infect them with the virus. Antisemitic coronavirus conspiracy theories also include the notion that Covid-19 is a Jewish or Zionist plot perpetrated for a multitude of reasons, or that it’s a Jewish or Zionist hoax. In addition to this, New Antisemitism in ACMS shows an influx of conspiracy theories stemming from the BLM movement,

such as the false claim that Israel trained the officer who killed George Floyd, or that Palestinians were used as ‘guinea pigs’ by the IDF to perfect this method of killing. Aside from this, ACMS analyzed many false claims that Jews are responsible for the slave trade or that Blacks are the ‘real’ Jews and that ‘current’ Jews are just imposters who stole their heritage in order to control and enslave them. Variations of these conspiracy theories in the form of Classic Antisemitism also exist in ACMS in large amounts and make up much of the discourse analyzed as Classic Antisemitism.

4. The United Kingdom

This year, the United Kingdom had various controversies surrounding antisemitism. Similar trends regarding coronavirus antisemitism made their way to Britain as well; both in New and Classic forms of antisemitism. In addition to this, the worldwide spread of the BLM movement also resulted in the spread of antisemitic conspiracy theories related to it which were not widely seen in prior years. These theories sparked strong controversy in the UK and prompted a 48-hour “Twitter blackout” in protest of the platform’s lack of seriousness in dealing with antisemitism. However, as in prior years, it appears as though there were no clear large spikes or trends in the antisemitic discourse that were directly related to real-world events. When examining the discourse on dates surrounding breaking news related to antisemitism in the UK, the Covid-19 pandemic, the Jewish community in Britain, or developments surrounding the Labour party’s controversies with antisemitism, ACMS showed little to no reaction in the online discourse. This is a complete contrast to what can be observed in the United States, where the discourse is heavily influenced by real-world events and large spikes in reaction to them occur regularly. The sole exception seems to be on October 29th, following the publication of EHRC’s inquiry into antisemitism within the Labour party, when an examination of the discourse showed a spike in antisemitic discourse about the Labour party, Jeremy Corbyn, the EHRC report, or the ‘influence of Israel on British politics.’ That being said, the overarching trend set in previous years was still visible in ACMS throughout 2020 and suggests that ACMS is continually effective in portraying cultural differences on mainstream social media platforms.

Like the United States, New Antisemitism accounted for the majority of antisemitic discourse, but in the UK, that majority was almost overwhelming. According to ACMS, over 80% of the antisemitic discourse on mainstream platforms in English emanating from the UK contained New Antisemitism (80.2% to be exact). This was followed by Classic Antisemitism (14%) and Holocaust Denial and Distortion (5.8%). The top sub-categories of antisemitic discussion were BDS, Demonization of Israel, Delegitimization of Israel, Zionist Conspiracy, and Jewish Conspiracy. The categories of antisemitic discussion shift considerably when examining the discourse on unregulated platforms, where the majority of the discourse contained Classic Antisemitism (66.2%), followed by New Antisemitism (21.5%) and Holocaust Denial and Distortion (12.4%).

5. Insights

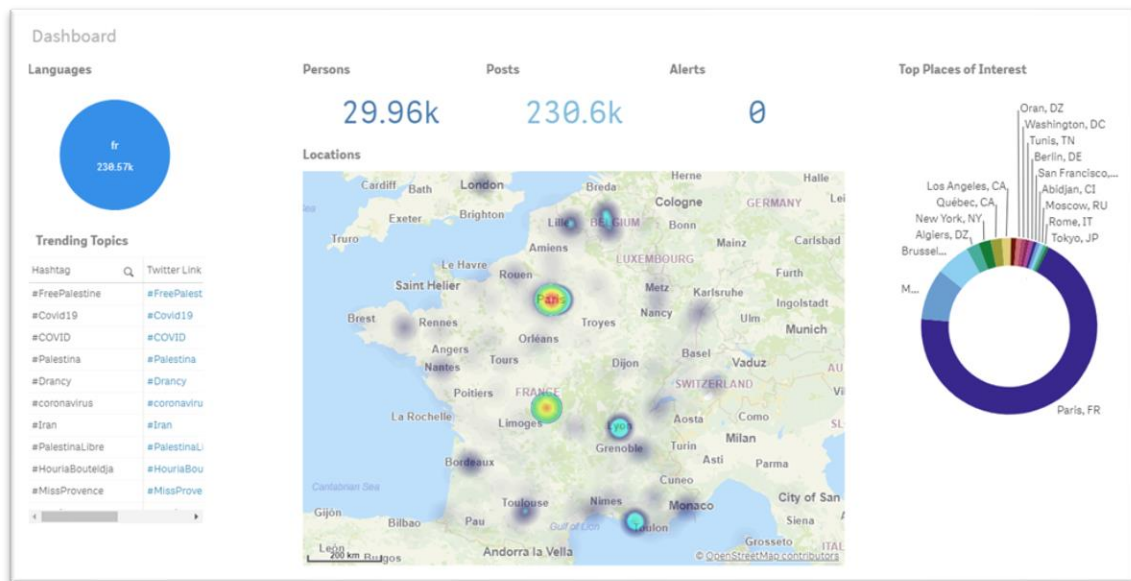
In 2020, ACMS provided numerous insights into online antisemitism. The differences between the type of discourse found and analyzed on mainstream platforms versus unregulated and obscure platforms shows that efforts by mainstream social media platforms to restrict antisemitism and hate speech can be successful in ridding the platforms of antisemitic users. However, the data from ACMS shows that users banned from these sites are simply migrating over to unregulated platforms where their rhetoric won't be restricted; so the online antisemitism isn't disappearing altogether, but rather moving to darker corners of the internet. While a big-picture analysis of English ACMS data showed that trends in the leading locations and sub-categories of antisemitism have remained mostly the same over the past few years, an in-depth analysis revealed that trends in the discourse differed according to locations and were likely driven by cultural differences. This was especially clear when examining and comparing the discourses emanating from the two leading countries in English antisemitism; the United States and the United Kingdom. The data from ACMS clearly shows that spikes in the antisemitic discourse in the US are usually reactionary, while the exact opposite is true of the UK. This suggests that ACMS can effectively depict varying behaviors of online antisemitism as they relate to their location and respective culture. Such insights continue to help us understand online antisemitism and antisemitic trends, and thus play a crucial role in providing solutions to combat such antisemitism.

ACMS ANALYSIS — FRENCH

French authorities recorded a sharp drop in 2020 in the number of antisemitic incidents as the country faced strict lockdowns and restrictions on freedom of movement imposed by the government to combat the spread of Covid-19. In the virtual space, radicals used the pandemic to incite Jew-hatred. However, ACMS indicates that antisemitic discourse referring specifically to the Covid-19 pandemic seems to be confined at the margins of radical virtual communities structured around well-known French influencers.

1. General Trends

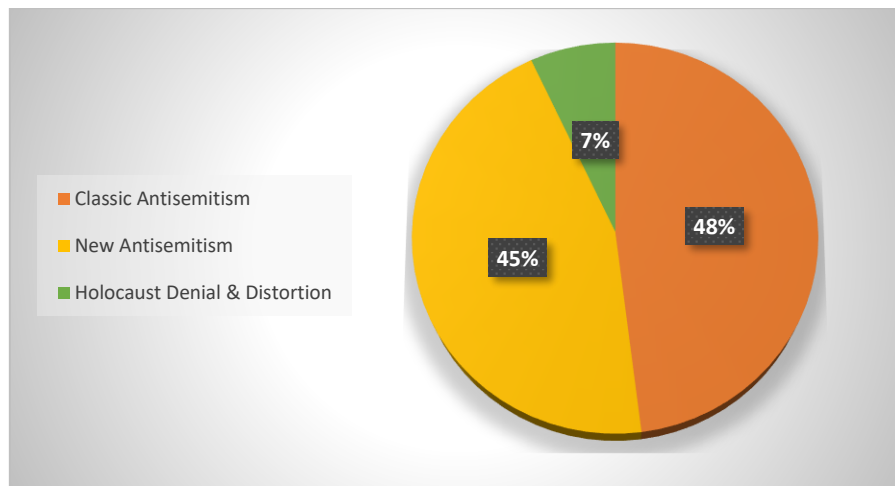
- Between January 1 and December 31, 2020, ACMS recorded more than 230K antisemitic messages posted in French by roughly 30K users.



Dashboard – Online Antisemitism in French Language, 2020 (Source: ACMS)

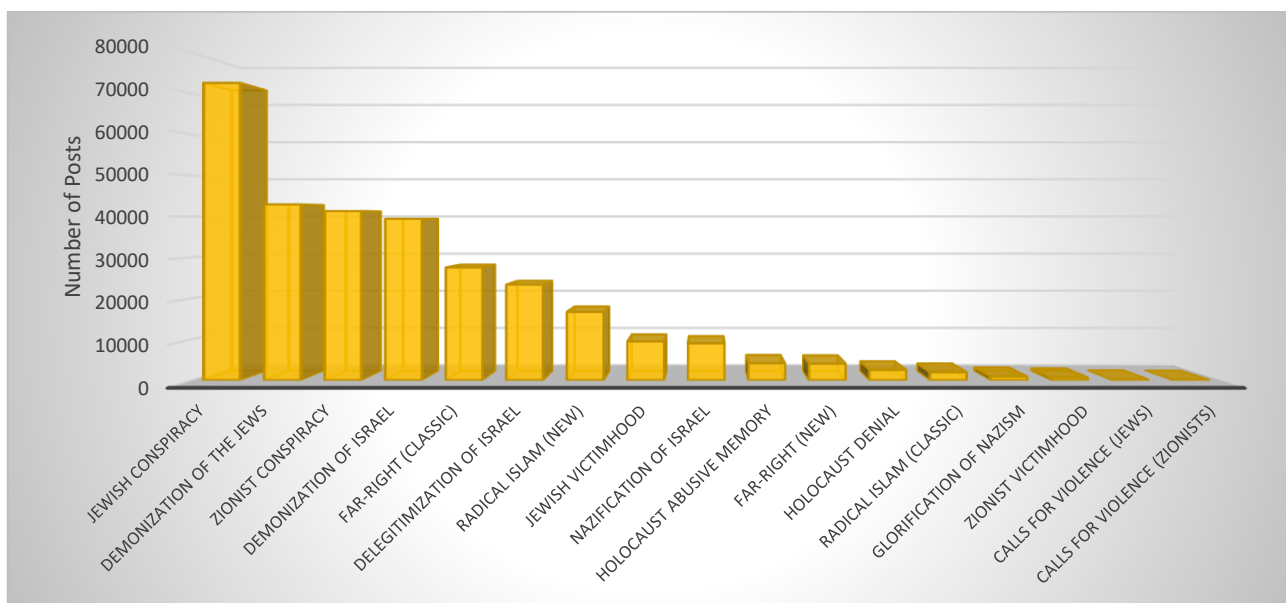
- French users are significantly underrepresented on alternative platforms (4Chan, 8Kun, BitChute, Gab, Minds, Stormfront) with roughly a thousand antisemitic posts recorded in 2020 (less than 1% of the total). The great majority of the conversations are classified as classic conspiracy theories and far-right discourse. Anglo-Saxon white supremacists and neo-Nazis predominate in this alternative English-speaking ecosystem.
- Like in 2018 and 2019, ACMS identified Paris as the city with the highest number of individuals in the world who posted antisemitic messages in 2020. When examining the antisemitic activity within France, data shows that the highest concentration of users spreading antisemitic content is localized in urban areas with a high population density. The top regions identified are Ile-de-France (the region of Paris) where the majority of activity is concentrated, followed by the regions of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Occitanie in Southern France, the region of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes in the center, the Grand Est in Eastern France, and the Hauts-de-France in Northern France. As in previous years, it should be noted that the correlation remains strong between the French Ministry of Interior's map¹⁷ (2017 data) of people showing signs of Islamist radicalization and the map of antisemitic activity recorded by ACMS.
- Data analysis by categories shows that *Classic Antisemitism* makes up 48% of the French antisemitic discourse in 2020, *New Antisemitism* accounts for 45%, while *Holocaust Denial & Distortion* consists of 7%.

¹⁷ <http://bit.ly/3hu5OiH>



Breakdown of antisemitic discourse by main categories – French language, 2020 (Source: ACMS)

- When breaking down data by discourse subcategories, *Jewish Conspiracy* theories constitutes the most prevalent type of online antisemitic discourse disseminated in French in 2020, followed by *Demonization of the Jews*, *Zionist Conspiracy* theories, *Demonization of Israel*, and *Far-Right*.



Breakdown of antisemitic discourse by subcategories - French Language, 2020 (Source: ACMS)

2. Data Interpretation and Main Hypothesis

2.1 Classic Antisemitism is Consistently Gaining Ground

Since the 2000's, spikes in antisemitic attitudes in France mostly coincided with Israeli military operations sparking radical anti-Zionist sentiment and discourse, which regularly manifested itself in physical violence against French Jews. In fact, the collective internalization of antisemitism as a criminal offense following the Holocaust led to a prevalence over time to use the term "Zionist" as a coded attack against Jews, and anti-Zionist discourse as an acceptable form of antisemitism.

However, antisemitic manifestations have evolved in recent years and are increasingly impacted by endogenous factors which trigger traditional forms of antisemitism. These include tensions surrounding the place of Islam in French society, the political crackdown on radical Islamism, Holocaust public memory, the Yellow Vests movement, the Covid-19 pandemic, etc.

When closely examining the evolution of the antisemitic discourse disseminated in the French-speaking online ecosystem, ACMS shows a consistent upward trend between 2018 and 2020 in the proportion of conversations containing classic antisemitic tropes while a downward trend in the proportion of content containing new antisemitism (see table below).

Main Categories	2018	2019	2020
Classic Antisemitism	33%	39%	48%
New Antisemitism	60%	54%	45%
Holocaust Denial & Distortion	7%	7%	7%

Table: Evolution of antisemitic discourse types in French between 2018 and 2020 (Source: ACMS)

This structural evolution indicates decreasing inhibitions within French civil society which translate into a resurgence of traditional forms of antisemitism. Antisemitism is indeed increasingly expressed in an open manner and tries less and less to disguise itself behind the mask of anti-Zionism. This phenomenon manifests itself mostly in the significant proliferation of classic antisemitic conspiracy theories recycling century-old antisemitic myths; particularly the notion that powerful Jews work behind the scenes to orchestrate plots, manipulate governments and global events, and establish a Jewish-controlled New World Order.

2.2 Holocaust Education and Holocaust Denial Legislation Have A Deterrent Effect

Content denying and minimizing the Holocaust makes up roughly 1% of all antisemitic discussion in French, while posts glorifying national socialism constitutes only 0.3% of the total discourse. In parallel, ACMS indicates a clear underrepresentation of public conversations in French denying the Holocaust¹⁸ compared to other cultures (4% out of all languages combined), while at the same time displaying an overrepresentation of discussions which contain an adversarial competitive victimhood narrative¹⁹ or the mocking of Holocaust victim memory (French makes up 75% out of all languages combined).

¹⁸ Content referring to subcategory "Holocaust Denial & Minimization"

¹⁹ Content referring to subcategories "Holocaust Abusive Memory," "Jewish Victimhood," & "Zionist Victimhood."

See paragraph entitled "Holocaust Trivialization & Competitive Victimhood" in page 83. For more explanations about the notions of competitive memories and victimhood.

This data might lead to two different conclusions:

- The marginal proportion of discussion which blatantly denies the Holocaust might indicate that public policies of memory and Holocaust education seem effective in France, while a strong legal framework against blatant Holocaust denial and the glorification of Nazism might have a deterrent effect.
- However, this encouraging data should be interpreted cautiously as the Jewish genocide and the question of antisemitism are being widely trivialized, ridiculed, and challenged within French antisemitic virtual communities. Since the institutionalization in the 1990's of Holocaust memory (which included the codification of a strong corpus of laws, public policies of memory, education, etc.) and the recognition in 1995 by then-President Jacques Chirac of the "imprescriptible debt of France" to the victims of the deportation, the phenomenon of "competitive memories" and "competitive victimhood" emerged alongside a narrative mocking Holocaust victims pushed by leading multi-convicted antisemitic influencers such as Dieudonné and Alain Soral. Jews are regularly accused of holding a monopoly on the 'status of victim' and of using the Holocaust and antisemitism to blackmail the world.

2.3 Islamist Radicalization: Social Medias' Role, Cyber-Islamism & Online Antisemitism

Another year, similar diagnostic: antisemitic conversations using radical Islamist and Muslim identitarian rhetoric is overrepresented in French-speaking radicalized virtual communities compared to other cultures. Indeed, ACMS shows that while French consists of only 13% of the total antisemitic discourse,²⁰ nearly 52% of posts classified as Islamist antisemitism were posted in French. Furthermore, ACMS reveals a consistent upward trend in the number of antisemitic tweets classified under the subcategory *Radical Islam – Classic Antisemitism* with peaks in September and October 2020, demonstrating once again the strong correlation between online activity and real-world events. Indeed, September and October 2020 were marked by a heightened threat level and tension throughout the country surrounding radical Islam in the wake of interconnected events. The opening of the trial for the deadly 2015 attack against *Charlie Hebdo* and the Hyper Cacher supermarket, *Charlie Hebdo's* republication of the prophet Muhammed cartoons, three consecutive Islamist terror attacks, and the instrumentalization of President Macron's crackdown on "Islamist separatism," triggered widespread anger and outrage across the Muslim world. The French Jewish community, which is very high on the list of targets for radical Islamists, is regularly blamed for the rise of Islamophobic sentiments to advance its own interests.

Additionally, the shocking beheading of Samuel Paty highlighted the extent of Islamist activism and its translation into real-world violence. In October 2020, the History teacher was targeted close to

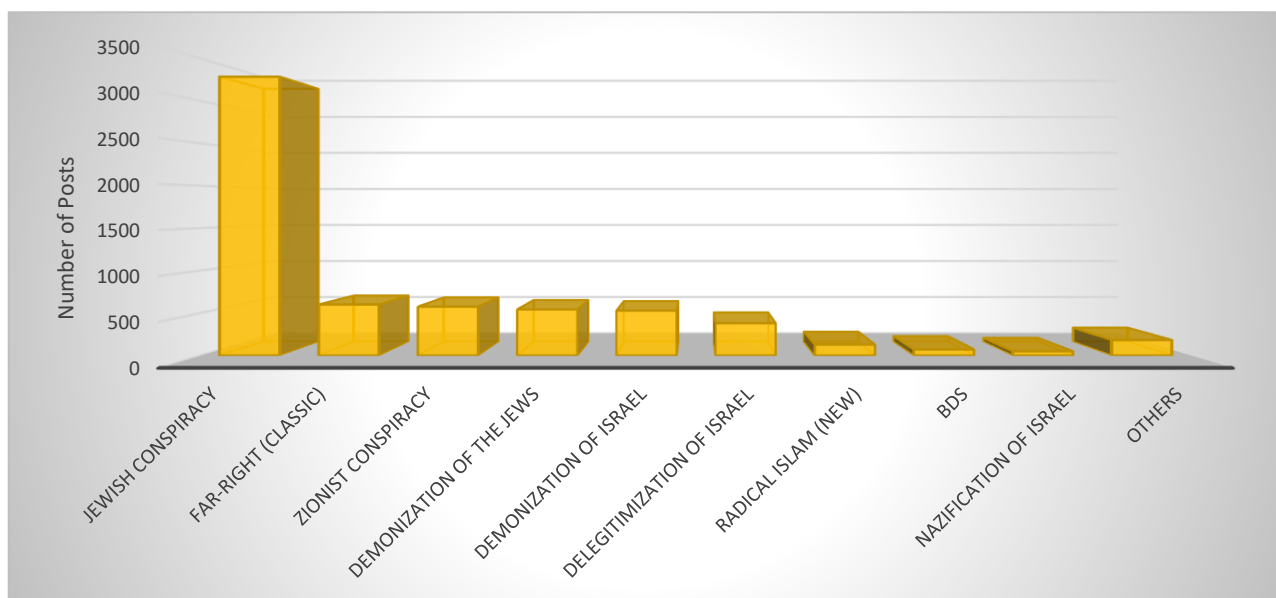
²⁰ French, English, German, Spanish, and Russian. In this specific case, Arabic language was excluded from the statistical analysis to avoid a methodological bias since analyzing radical and identitarian Islam in Arabic language has no significance in this specific analysis.

his school near Paris for showing cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in a civics class on freedom of expression after the caricatures were republished by *Charlie Hebdo*, a satirical newspaper targeted in a 2015 terror attack. The attacker was identified as Abdullah Anzorov, an 18-year-old Chechen born in Moscow. Immediately after Paty's murder, the Minister Delegate in charge of Citizenship, Marlène Schiappa, assembled representatives from social media networks to discuss bolstering the "fight against cyber-Islamism" amid a heated debate over the alleged role of social media in the victim's tragic fate. Anti-terrorism prosecutor Jean-François Ricard said there was a "direct causal link" between the killing and an online hate campaign that was orchestrated against Mr. Paty.²¹ In fact, Samuel Paty was targeted by an online hate campaign launched by the father of one of his pupils who published the teacher's school address in a social media post just days before the beheading. Moreover, just before police gunned him down, Abdullah Anzorov posted Paty's severed head on Twitter, claiming that he had executed one of Macron's "dogs of hell" who had belittled the prophet. According to ACMS, Anzorov was active on Twitter in recent months and disseminated antisemitic posts characterized by radical Islamist rhetoric.

3. An Analysis of Coronavirus-Related Antisemitic Discourse

3.1 Data Analysis

Out of the total number of antisemitic messages recorded in French in 2020 (230K), roughly 5.4K posts refer to the Coronavirus pandemic (2.3%).



Breakdown of Coronavirus-related antisemitic discourse by subcategories, 2020 (Source: ACMS)

Approximately 67% of these posts contain *Classic Antisemitism*, 29% contain *New Antisemitism*, and 3% contain *Holocaust Denial and Distortion*. When examining these numbers up close, the great

²¹ <http://bit.ly/2X2QUq1>.

majority of the antisemitic content referring to the pandemic is classified as *Conspiracy Theories*, followed by *Far-Right*, *Demonization of the Jews*, *Delegitimization* and *Demonization of Israel*.

3.2 Characteristics of Antisemitic Content Referring to Covid-19

Conspiracy Theories 2.0

Like in other countries, radicals have been using the pandemic to incite antisemitic hatred and disseminate century-old conspiracy theories while rebranding and recycling old tropes into contemporary form of antisemitism. As an example, former Health Minister Agnès Buzyn and her husband Yves Levy, a professor of clinical immunology and former CEO of INSERM (the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research), were targeted in a wave of antisemitic conspiracy theories.

Extreme Right-Wing Online Activism

The Covid-19 outbreak appears as another demonstration of the extent of online activism emanating from ultra-nationalist circles. Data classified by ACMS shows that antisemitic sentiments referring to the pandemic and connected to the far-right are relatively prevalent compared to other types of discourse. However, the gap between their marginal proportion within French society (in terms of numbers and influence) and their overrepresentation in the antisemitic virtual space, should be highlighted. Ultra-nationalist activists disseminate mostly classic antisemitic conspiracy theories online. The most prevalent libel which proliferates within those virtual communities is that “Globalist Jews” created the virus to impose a New World Order. Many accuse billionaire philanthropist Georges Soros, the Rothschild family and prominent French Jewish economic theorist Jacques Attali of orchestrating the outbreak as part of their plan to advance the “Great Replacement” of the White European population.

Demonization and Delegitimization of Israel

The virus metaphor has been used to revive hatred against Israel. Like in other countries, new trends such as “Israel is worse than the coronavirus” and “Israel is the virus” have emerged in French-speaking circles on Twitter. Similarly, hashtags such as #Covid48 and #Covid1948 have also gained popularity. It should be noted that French antisemitic virtual communities systematically echo the Palestinian narrative and pro-Palestinian groups. The coronavirus pandemic is no exception.

Holocaust Trivialization

The Covid-19 outbreak also led to the use of a terminology that associates it with the Holocaust. Although this phenomenon has been mostly notable in the US and Germany, some anti-vaccination and anti-restriction French activists have been seen equating Covid-19 restrictions to Nazi Germany policies.

Translation of image to the right: "Vaccine sets you free" (Source: Facebook screenshot). A reference to "Arbeit Macht Frei" ('Work sets you free') infamous phrase, a slogan which is known for appearing on the entrance of Auschwitz.



ACMS ANALYSIS — GERMAN

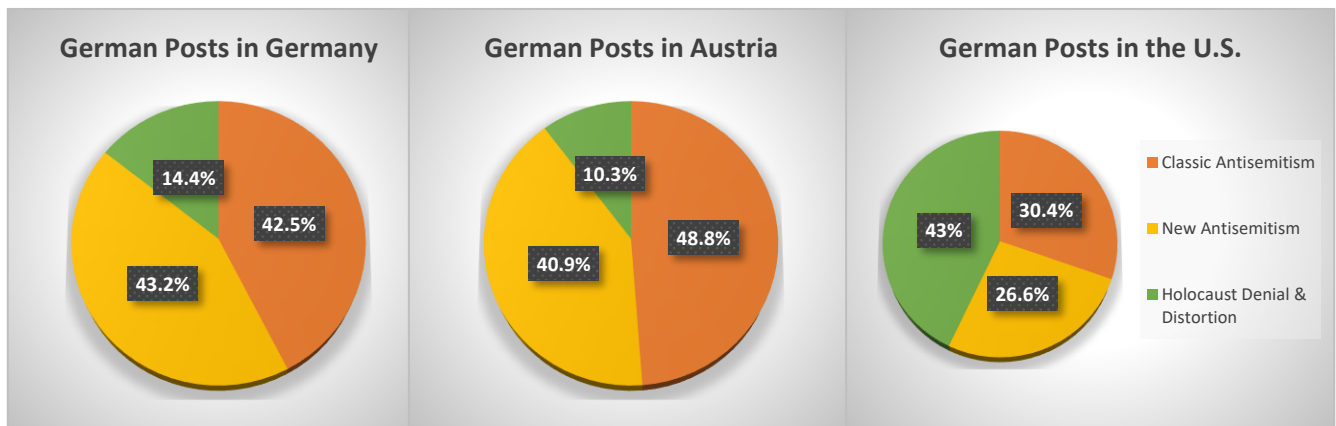
1. General Trends

In 2020, a total of 42.3K German posts, written by 11.24K users, were categorized as antisemitic by the ACMS. New Antisemitism (39.1%) and Classic Antisemitism (40.5%) accounted for almost the same share of antisemitic discourse, and Holocaust Denial and Distortion accounted for 20.4%. Interestingly, ACMS reveals a distinction when analyzing the language of antisemitic discourse emanating from Austria and Germany. New Antisemitism is more common among English-speaking users than among German-speaking ones. In Germany, 70% of the posts written in English contain New Antisemitism, compared to 43.2% of posts written in German. The situation in Austria is very similar. Concerning German posts, a drill-down into the user location shows a significant discrepancy between the countries with the most German-speaking users.

While Classic Antisemitism (48.8%) clearly exceeds New Antisemitism (40.9%) in the antisemitic online discourse in Austria, in Germany, New Antisemitism (43.2%) slightly exceeds Classic Antisemitism (42.5%). This correlates with the findings of the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution that New Antisemitism is currently the most important form of antisemitism in Germany.²² In both countries, however, Holocaust Denial and Distortion had by far the lowest share in the discourse (10.3% in Austria and 14.4% in Germany). This completely

²² <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/embed/vsbericht-2019.pdf>.

contrasts German posts written in the United States, which feature mostly Holocaust Denial and Distortion (43%), followed by Classic Antisemitism (30.4%) and New Antisemitism (26.6%).



A drill-down into the subcategories of antisemitic discourse shows that the four largest in Austria and Germany are Jewish Conspiracy, Demonization of Jews, Zionist Conspiracy, and the Demonization of Israel. In the United States, these subcategories are also among the most common, but are outnumbered by posts containing the Glorification of Nazism. In Germany and Austria, Holocaust Denial the Glorification of Nazism is prohibited by law. Therefore, in contrast to the United States where free speech reigns supreme, users refrain from posting overtly antisemitic, offensive, or hateful posts on public social media platforms. Instead, users publish this type of discourse on closed or “dark” social networks, or on platforms that are technically exempt from the German Network Enforcement Act (Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz)²³, which doesn’t apply to messenger services, such as Telegram. To demonstrate this, ACMS shows that Germany ranks fifth in worldwide popularity on alternative and unregulated platforms such as 4Chan, BitChute, or 8Kun.

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a steep increase in the number of subscribers to Telegram channels that publish antisemitic conspiracy theories.²⁴ At the same time, right-wing extremists and neo-Nazis use their Twitter accounts to redirect users to their other platforms, websites, and online shops. This results in a scenario where neo-Nazis are able to avoid posting content that violates the Network Enforcement Act while still utilizing Twitter to spread their ideas and grow their community. The incentives to move to unmonitored platforms grew even more after the Bundestag passed a package of laws and penalties this June. The laws state, inter alia, that social networks such as Facebook and Twitter will not only have to delete posts that

²³ The Act came into effect on January 1st, 2018, and obligates social media companies to delete offensive posts within 24 hours of them being reported or face fines up to €5 million if they fail to comply. However, §1(1) states that “platforms for the dissemination of specific content or intended for individual communication are not covered by the Act’s scope of application. Thus, vocational networks, specialist portals or email or messenger services do not fall within the scope of application.” Moreover, §1(2) states that “the provider of a social network is exempt from the obligations...if the social network has less than two million registered users in Germany.” Thus, antisemitic posts uploaded on these platforms remain visible to the public and continue influencing readers.

²⁴ For example, the Telegram channel “Qlobal-Change” increased its amount of subscribers from 36.5K on March 31st to 148K on December 24th; an increase of 300%.

contain prohibited content, but must also report them immediately to the Federal Criminal Police Office together with the IP address to help authorities find the author. The laws also target users and recommend prison sentences of up to three years in the case of online hate and agitation, and specify that antisemitism should be given special consideration when assigning punishment.²⁵

2. Content Analysis

2.1 Holocaust-Related Content

Following International Holocaust Commemoration Day, the demand to draw an “end line” to dealing with the Holocaust and to end the “guilt cult” surrounding the Holocaust was very prominent among German-language social discourse. Users claimed that the overemphasis on Germany’s crimes obscured the larger narrative of the country’s history and that it was imposed upon them by Jews and the allied forces to strip the Germans of their national pride. Furthermore, they claim that the crimes committed during the Nazi-era are exploited by the Jews for propaganda and financial purposes. The users expressed that they were “fed-up” with hearing about the Holocaust, insisted that they are not responsible for it, and demanded an end to Holocaust commemoration. Moreover, around May 8th, the day World War II ended, there was a surge on social media of posts calling it a day of defeat and mourning. Phrases like “No #DayOfLiberation,” “May 8 #WeAreNotCelebrating,” and “#8May1945 was one of the blackest days in the history of our People,” were common among neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists in Germany and Austria, as were posts talking about the “glorious German nation.”

2.2 Coronavirus-Related Content

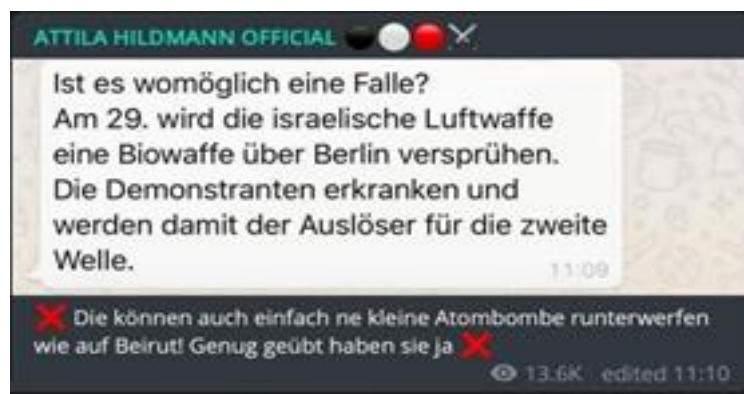
As ACMS shows, the number of posts featuring Holocaust trivialization and antisemitic conspiracy theories referencing Covid-19 have been on the rise since March. The most common types of antisemitic posts relate to different forms of conspiracy theories and among them 53.4% contained Classic Antisemitism. Typical antisemitic codes and arguments were adapted to the coronavirus crisis. Spreading from the United States, the QAnon conspiracy theory, which didn’t have much of a following in Germany before the outbreak of the pandemic, spread significantly in German-language social discourse. It includes a modernized version of the blood libel conspiracy theory claiming that Jews kidnap, torture, and kill children to use their blood in order to produce adrenochrome for an alleged anti-aging product. Other altered antisemitic codes include theories surrounding “Jewish influence,” and claims the pandemic serves the Jews to amass enormous profits from the vaccines, and thus take over the world’s economy, and ultimately, world domination. The age-old antisemitic trope claiming Jews poison wells was modernized to claim Jews are responsible for the spread of the virus, or to accuse Jewish scientists and institutions in Israel of developing the virus as a biological weapon. Well-known Jewish personalities such as members of the Rothschild family or

²⁵ Additionally, posts threatening bodily harm, sexual assault, or property damage now count as a criminal offense, and even “liking” a post detailing an act of hatred that is either hypothetical or has already been committed will likely result in penalties as well.

George Soros are referred to as backers, masterminds, or profiteers of the pandemic because of their alleged influence on the pharmaceutical industry. Soros is also accused of using the crisis to distract from “his plan” to have Austria, Germany, and Europe invaded by Muslim refugees. Aside from this, antisemitic users call Covid-19 the “Jew/Zionists virus.” Furthermore, 28.5% of the posts related to Covid-19 contain Holocaust Denial and Distortion. Most of them express Holocaust trivialization by comparing Coronavirus restrictions to the antisemitic policies of the Nazi regime, and those who oppose them compare themselves to Jews during the Holocaust. For instance, the infamous phrase “Arbeit Macht Frei” has been repurposed to say “Impfen Macht Frei,” which means “Vaccination Sets You Free.” Anti-vaxxers also compare alleged “vaccination stations” to Auschwitz, and claim that the police are developing a dictatorship which will persecute those who refuse the vaccine by sending them to concentration camps.



Translation: Compulsory vaccination



Translation: Could it be a trap? On the 29th the Israeli Air Force will spray a bioweapon over Berlin. The demonstrators fall ill and thus become the trigger for the second wave. They can just drop a little atomic bomb like on Beirut! They have practiced enough.

Many Germans, including known cultural figures, were radicalized during the Corona crisis and have become important propagators of antisemitic conspiracy theories. An example is Atilla Hildmann, a well-known author of vegan cookbooks, who since the Coronavirus outbreak has been criticized as a propagator of antisemitism, Holocaust trivialization, and conspiracy theories. He spreads them on his Telegram channel, where the number of subscribers rose from some 59K in May to 119.4K in December. The channel features a large number of antisemitic messages concerning Soros, Rothschild, Jewish world conspiracy and domination, and claims that German Chancellor Angela Merkel is both a Jew or a puppet controlled by Jews and Zionists. He repeatedly talks of Covid-19 being a ‘Zionist biological weapon,’ and of an orchestrated genocide through Covid-19 vaccinations planned by a Zionist regime coordinated by Merkel and Bill Gates.

3. Insights

In 2020, hard-core antisemitism can be found on unregulated platforms rather than on the monitored platforms. Intelligence services already warned that the internet is an essential factor in dynamizing the spread of antisemitic agitation and of radicalizing people of all milieux. Both the

extreme right-wing terrorist who committed the terror attack on the synagogue in Halle last Yom Kippur, and the Islamist terrorist who carried out the terror attack in Vienna on November 2nd, were radicalized via social media. To diminish these radicalizing effects and reduce antisemitic discourse online, an extension of the Network Enforcement Act to include more platforms, such as Telegram, is needed. Telegram has some 7.8 million active users daily in Germany and should thus be held responsible for erasing antisemitic posts and shutting down antisemitic accounts.

Only time will tell if the new package of laws and penalties will make an impact. However, it will surely not be sufficient to minimize the exposure of antisemitic content. In addition, there is a need for varied educational programs to promote tolerance, including analyzing and destroying antisemitic stereotypes, sensitizing the authorities and the public to antisemitic content, and informing them about Judaism, the history of the Jews in Germany and Austria, and their contribution to the local culture, economy, and politics. Only a combination of legislation and education will lead to a reduction in online and offline antisemitism.

ACMS ANALYSIS — ARABIC

During 2020, the ACMS collected approximately 553K posts in Arabic compared to 746K posts in 2019, a decrease of approximately 26%. A possible explanation for this is the coronavirus crisis, which became the focus of Arabic discourse on social media due to the worldwide closures and economic crises. In addition, the regulation of social networks increased this year with platforms like Facebook and Twitter renewing their policies to prohibit antisemitic hate speech, such as Holocaust denial. As a result, some Arab-speaking antisemitic influencers were blocked from social media as part of the fight against antisemitism.

Arabic posts account for the second largest amount of antisemitic discourse analyzed by ACMS. This year, the Arabic language represents 29% of all posts in the system and included a shift in the discourse where New Antisemitism overcame Classic Antisemitism as opposed to the previous year. It should be noted that the majority of discussion surrounding New Antisemitism centered around denying the existence of Israel in various forms, while Classic Antisemitism included mostly Islamic religious references.

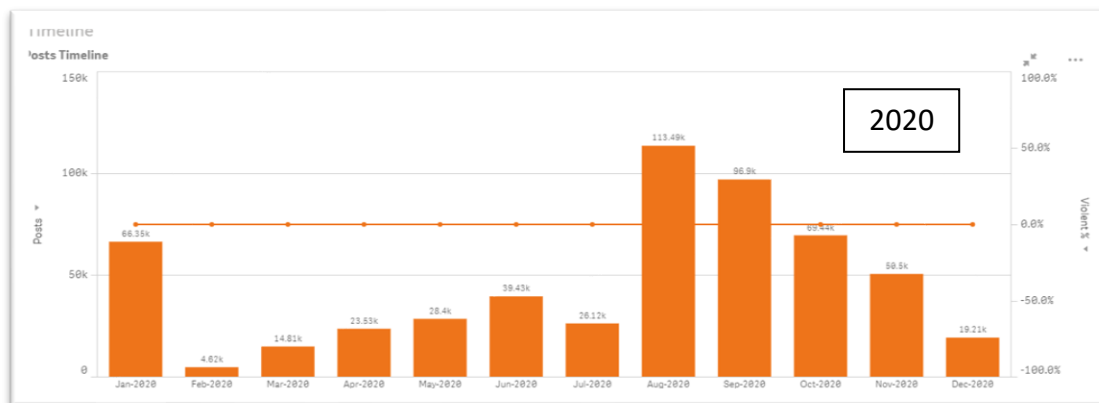
In the Arab and Muslim world there is almost no negative stigma for sharing antisemitic discourse, and this is all the more true for New Antisemitism. An exception is Bahrain, which recently backed the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. Unlike other countries where antisemitic events take place in relation to a local Jewish community, in Arab countries there are no significant Jewish

communities and the antisemitic discourse that takes place in the Arab space is not directed at Jews but at the State of Israel or an imaginary Jewish collective.

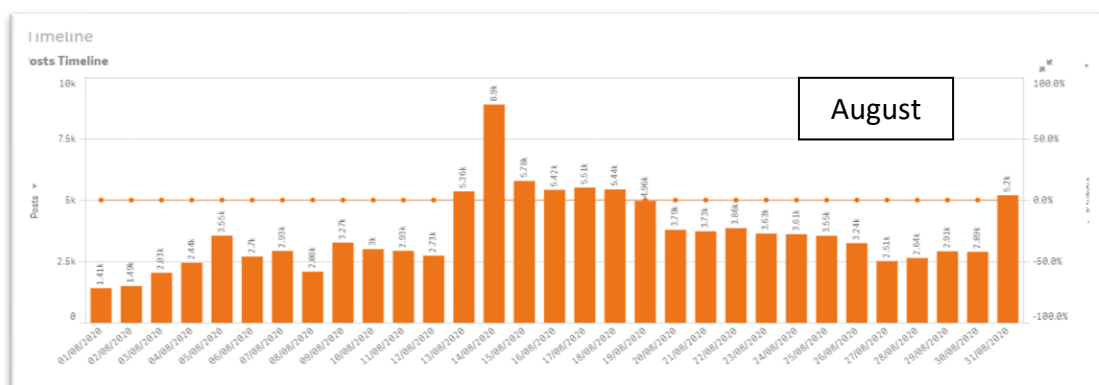
This year, the antisemitic discourse in Arabic was centered around three contexts:

- The normalization between Arab countries and the state of Israel.
- In rivalries between countries who are close in proximity to Israel, the term “Zionist” or “Jew” is used as a negative slur.
- In the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

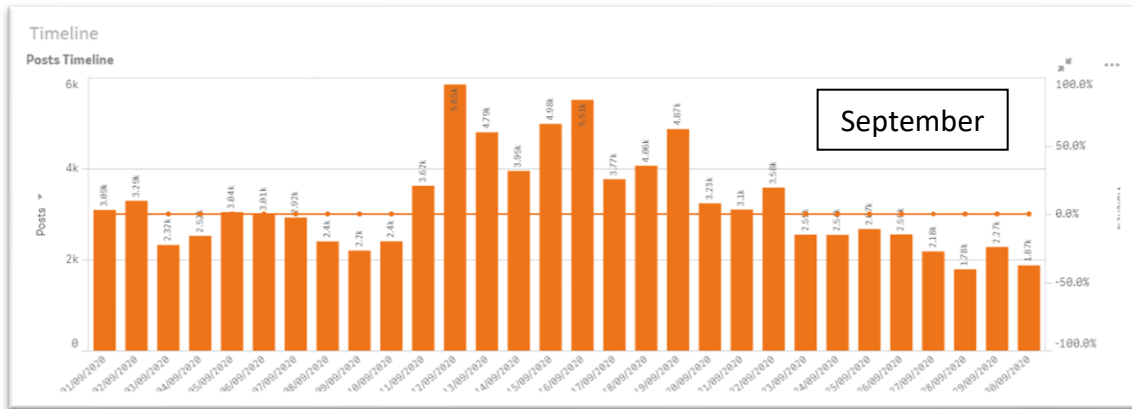
The main fluctuations in the antisemitic discourse in Arabic were in August and September, after it was announced that Israel would be signing the Abraham Accords and entering into a normalization agreement with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.



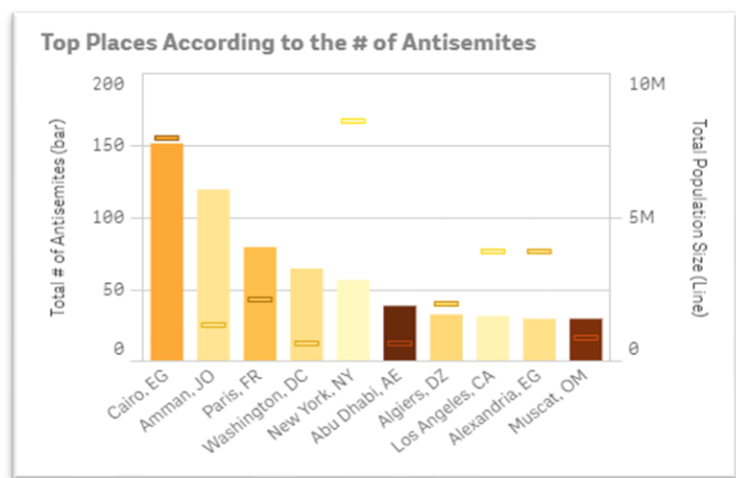
In mid-August, when it was announced that Israel and the United Arab Emirates would sign the agreement, the drastic rise in antisemitic discourse in Arabic can be seen.



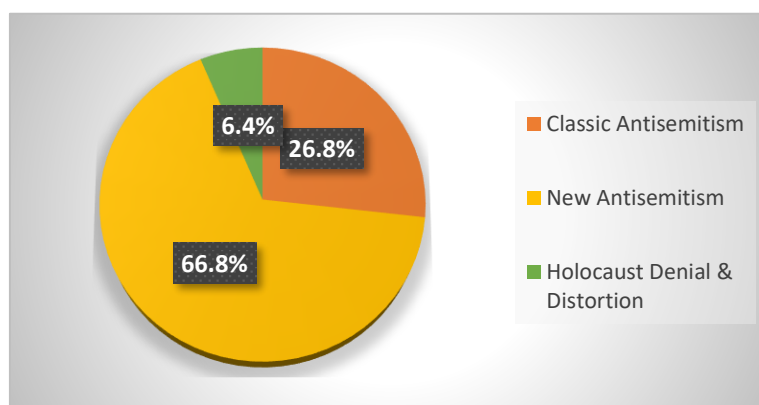
Similarly, in September, when the Abraham Accords were signed, it's clear the amount of antisemitic discourse is above average, especially between September 11-19, 2020.



Antisemitism in Arabic comes mainly from Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Yemen. This year there has been no change in the prominent cities in the antisemitic discourse in the Arabic language. The top four cities are Cairo, Amman, Paris, and Washington, with New York ranking fifth place in comparison to Alexandria in the previous year. It is important to note that there is antisemitic discourse in Arabic also among exiles and immigrants in the West. Arab-Islamist antisemitism in Europe, which is growing, is largely the result of imports of antisemitism (especially new antisemitism) from Arab countries to Europe. This can be identified by statements by clerics both online (i.e. antisemitic posts identified in European countries) and by the migration of extremist figures who import radical Islam to the receiving countries and preach lectures with antisemitic content in mosques and other communal areas. Apart from well-known antisemitic materials in the Middle East and beyond, there is also the flow of antisemitic ideas, opinions, and articles written in the Middle East and distributed throughout immigrant communities.



This year, there were marked changes in the characteristics of antisemitism in Arabic compared to the previous year. The main category in 2019 was Classic Antisemitism and it accounted for approximately 68% of the antisemitic Arabic discourse and mainly included Islamic antisemitism. This year, against the background of the normalization agreements with Israel and the Covid-19 pandemic, the discourse dealing with New Antisemitism in Arabic was high (about 66.8%). The discussion peaked from August to October and centered around discourse accepting and denouncing the normalization agreements with Israel.



Breakdown of antisemitic discourse by main categories, Arabic, 2020

It is expected that New Antisemitism will continue to be prominent in direct connection with the antisemitism resulting from the discourse of normalization with Israel. Classic Antisemitism will likely appear at the same time, but to a lesser degree, due to the separatist Islamic discourse that focuses on the West due to recent terrorist incidents in Europe (the terrorist attack in Vienna and the beheading of teacher Emanuel Patti in France for presenting cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad). The acts sparked a heated debate in France over the limits of freedom of expression and raised the question among Muslim opinion leaders “why are there laws against antisemitism and not against Islamophobia.” This question entails an attempt to define the critique of the Prophet as Islamophobia and not a critique of radical Islam.

Here the attempt to silence this criticism is on a religious basis that is compared to Jews and not on the basis of the right to freedom of expression, and in addition, antisemitism is used as a tool to silence criticism of the radical Islam that is popular in Europe. In France and Germany this phenomenon is prominent, and many posts include an analogy between the Muslims, who they claim are under Islamophobic attack, and the Jews of the 1930s. These posts reveal the question of why it is permissible to mock the prophet and present him in a negative light but not to deny the Holocaust. This discourse joins a broader antisemitic discourse centered around Jewish victimhood and argues that the Jews use the collective memory of the Holocaust at any given moment in order to present themselves in a positive light to the outside world.

When dividing the discourse into sub-categories, we see that the leading categories are the Demonization of Israel, the Delegitimization of Israel, and the Demonization of the Jews. This presents a shift in the discourse in comparison to last year, when the leading sub-category was Jewish Conspiracy. Correspondence on social media, as well as in Arab media, is widely used in discourse that includes demonization and delegitimization of Israel both by the radical left that supports the Palestinian struggle, including BDS activists, and by Islamist radicals in the West and Islamic countries. It is still very common to refer to Israel in ideologically charged terms, such as the “Zionist entity” or “Zionist enemy.” In addition, many antisemitic statements were circulated on social media about the normalization agreement, most of which argued that alliances with the Jews / Zionists should not be made because they violated agreements.

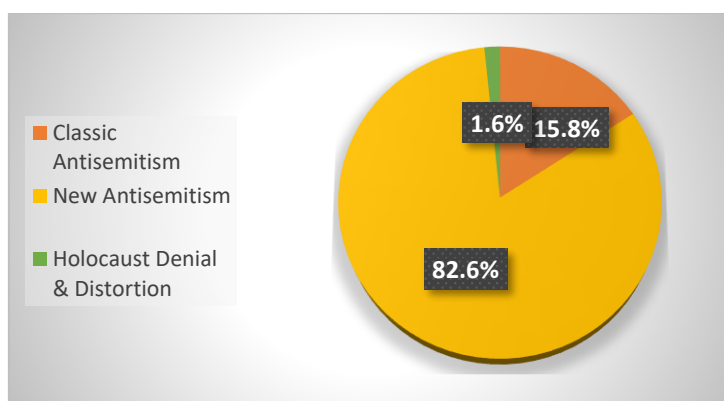
In the context of the corona, the hashtag “Covid48” and “Covid1948,” which compared the State of Israel to the coronavirus, is most common. This campaign, which is mainly popular on Twitter, began in mid-April right around Palestinian Prisoner’s Day and increased in popularity by the end of April during International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which saw a wave of antisemitic reactions using the hashtag.

- #Covid1948: This hashtag included about 250,000 tags—44% of the tweets appeared in Persian (107.5K), and included a tweet by the leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei. In addition to this, 8% (20K) of the tweets appeared in Arabic.
 - #Covid48: This hashtag was mainly used by pro-Palestinian users while comparing, like the previous hashtag, the Jewish nation-state, to the coronavirus. Also, this hashtag gained widespread momentum on social media and a lot of sympathy. This campaign started in Arabic and immediately expanded to other languages, such as English.
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ACMS ANALYSIS — SPANISH

This year, Spanish was added to the languages monitored by ACMS, and since April, the language has been continuously monitored on selected networks. The number of Spanish speakers worldwide is estimated at 500 million people dispersed throughout approximately 20 countries, where Spanish is either the official language or one of the languages commonly spoken. Most of these countries are located in South and Central America, but Spanish is also common in Europe or in the United States. This wide geographical spread is characterized by cultural and political differences and manifests diverse results in ACMS. This year, Spanish accounted for roughly 2.6% of all antisemitic discourse analyzed by the system.

In Spanish, as in the rest of the languages, antisemitic discourse is divided into three main categories: Classic Antisemitism, New Antisemitism, and Holocaust Denial and Distortion. According to this division, New Antisemitism accounted for 83.1% of all Spanish antisemitic discourse monitored by ACMS, Classic Antisemitism accounted for 15.3%, and Holocaust Denial and Distortion accounted for 1.6% (See image below).



Breakdown of antisemitic discourse by main categories, Spanish, 2020

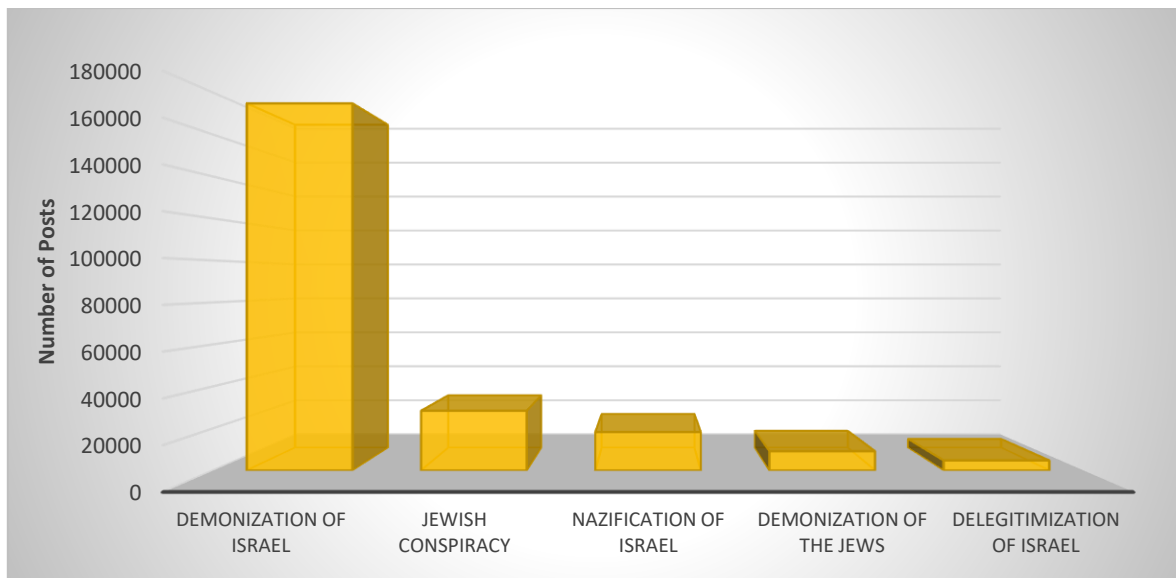
This division is consistent with what we know about antisemitic discourse in Spanish-speaking regions in general, and in Latin America in particular. Latin America is a region where, on one hand, there is a large audience that holds antisemitic perceptions based primarily on Classic Antisemitism rooted in Catholicism. However, these audiences are less exposed to social networks such as Twitter. On the other hand, we see a respectable representation of New Antisemitism on monitored social media networks driven by three main groups:

- First and second-generation Muslim and Christian immigrants from the Middle East and the Muslim world (Lebanese, Palestinians, etc.),
- Countries such as Venezuela which are political partners of countries throughout the Middle East and Muslim world, and
- Left-wing parties in Latin America and Spain, which include many youths and social media influencers associated with the “Progressive Latin left” who have traditionally held critical views of Israel expressed in a variety of manifestations of New Antisemitism.

Each main category is divided into several subcategories:

- **Classic Antisemitism** includes - Demonization of the Jews, Jewish conspiracy theories, expressions of racism of the extreme right and a call for explicit violence against Jews.
- **New Antisemitism** includes - Demonization of Zionism / the State of Israel, "Zionist conspiracy" theories, a call for explicit violence against Zionism, BDS, Nazification of The State of Israel.
- **Holocaust Denial and Distortion** includes - Holocaust Denial or minimization, Jewish responsibility for the Holocaust, Glorification of Nazism, Utilizing memory of the Holocaust against Jews / Israel and Holocaust inversion.

ACMS shows that the sub-category ‘Demonization of Israel’ leads significantly as the most popular and common sub-category of antisemitic discussion among Spanish-speaking users on social media. The following graph shows the most prominent sub-categories among Spanish-speakers and the share that each sub-category occupies:



Breakdown of antisemitic discourse by subcategories, Spanish, 2020

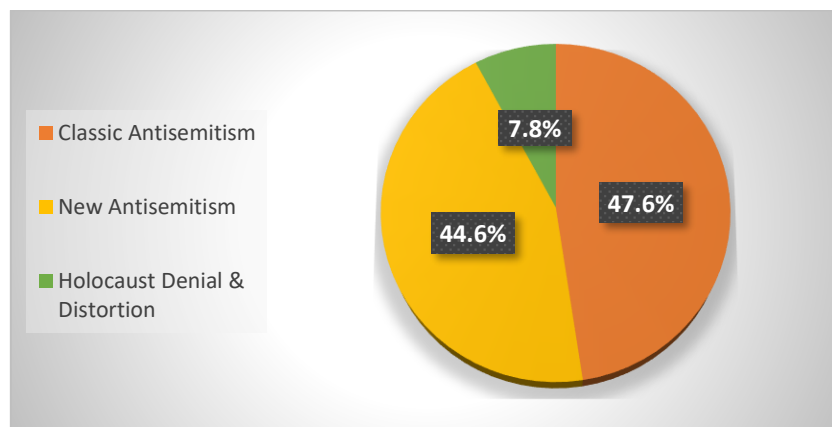
The dispersal of antisemitic discourse according to regional divisions should also be noted. ACMS shows that the data of antisemitic Spanish discourse corresponds to regions where Spanish is an official or commonly spoken language. According to ACMS, particularly notable areas are the Iberian Peninsula in Europe, the Southern Cone region of South America (Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay), Central America, and the Southern United States. It is interesting to note the extraordinarily disproportionate concentration of antisemitic discourse emanating from Venezuela (94% of which is New Antisemitism); especially when considering the fact that the country has a very small Jewish community and a relatively insignificant number of social media users. This places Venezuela as an important source of online antisemitism within the Spanish-speaking world. The reasons for this are mainly political and are further elaborated on in a chapter of this report that analyzes antisemitism by geographical areas.

Following Venezuela, the Iberian Peninsula has the most concentrated amount of antisemitic discourse. Here, ACMS shows a particularly high level of New Antisemitism and anti-Israel discourse. Another interesting statistic is the comparison between the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America. If we examine each region separately, it's clear that New Antisemitism is more prevalent than other forms of antisemitism, however in Spain we see that New Antisemitism accounts for approximately 80% of the discourse, while that number exceeds 91% in Latin America. On the other hand, if we analyze the results in the Southern United States, an area where Spanish is commonly spoken, New Antisemitism accounts for 74% of the antisemitic discourse, while Classic Antisemitism accounts for 24%. It can thus be said that the online antisemitic discourse in the Southern United States has more in common with the discourse emanating from Spain than the discourse emanating from Latin

ACMS ANALYSIS — RUSSIAN

This year, Russian was added to the languages monitored by ACMS, and since April, the language has been continuously monitored on selected networks. It is estimated that there are about 260 million Russian speakers in the world.²⁶ We have not found up-to-date data on how many Russian-speaking users are on Twitter, but it is estimated that there are about 9.5 million registered users located in Russia.²⁷ About 650,000 of them have an active Twitter account and post at least one tweet a month, which produces about 32 million Russian tweets a month. About 58% of them are men, and 42% women.²⁸ This trend differs from other popular social networks in Russia such as Facebook, VK, Instagram, or YouTube, where the percentage of women using the platform is equal to or higher than the percentage of men. An explanation for this may be the uniqueness of Twitter users. This network is very popular among many media employees and civil servants, and in some regions in Russia they are committed to maintaining a Twitter account. The percentage of men who work in both these industries is higher than the percentage of women. Additionally, the relative anonymity of Twitter in relation to other social networks gives it priority among people who want to “influence” and not be “influenced;” a desire that is present among both media employees and civil servants.

ACMS divides the data into three categories: Classic Antisemitism, New Antisemitism, and Holocaust Denial and Distortion. According to the data collected so far, the Classic Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial and Distortion make up the majority of antisemitic tweets in Russian, 47.6% and 44.6% respectively, while New Antisemitism remains a relatively small segment; less than 10% of the total tweets.

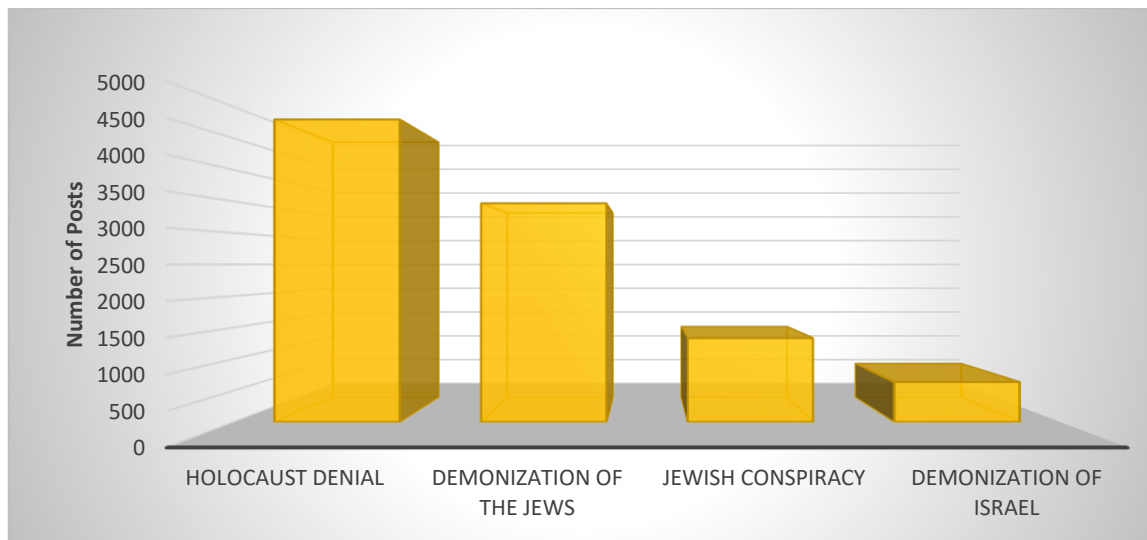


Breakdown of antisemitic discourse by main categories, Russian, 2020

²⁶ <https://cutt.ly/Ah1V5dV>.

²⁷ <https://cutt.ly/ah1Bq1G>.

²⁸ <https://cutt.ly/qh1Brcf>.



Breakdown of antisemitic discourse by subcategories, Russian, 2020

The findings by ACMS represent the unique circumstances that exist within the Russian-speaking region where a combination of Classic Antisemitism and "Soviet" Antisemitism, which was shaped in the years following World War II, make up the majority of antisemitic discourse while New Antisemitism is almost completely absent. A large portion of the tweets that ACMS identifies as Classic Antisemitism contain derogatory slurs and various profanities towards Jews with no deeper internal content. The second largest portion contains conspiracy theories regarding the influence of Jews on the Russian government or on the supposed Jewish control of the world in general.

In recent years, the Russian legislature passed a series of laws which make it difficult to revise the historical facts and results of World War II. This system of laws also makes it very difficult to share expressions of total Holocaust denial. That being said, there is still a tendency to alter the memory of the Holocaust which is rooted in the Soviet conception of memory, in which the Holocaust was not highlighted as a unique event and the extermination of Jews in the Soviet Union was counted as part of the extermination of Soviet citizens, not Jews. This type of memory continues to be popular among broad sections of Russian speakers who express these ideas on social media, producing the results we see in the graphs above. In some of the tweets on the subject, the Holocaust is compared to local events that take place in the real world. A popular example is the comparison on social media between the anti-government riots in Belarus and the Holocaust, which gained momentum on Twitter in October and November.

The low percentage of tweets about New Antisemitism is related to the almost complete absence within the Russian-speaking world of a "radical left" in the Western sense of the word. Within the Russian-speaking world, the "radical left" consists mainly of a mixture of ideas of socialist economic principles and conservative nationalism. Therefore, the post-colonial discourse has almost no effect on left-wing movements, which leads to a sharp decline in interest in what is happening in the Israeli-Arab conflict, and as a result, less disproportionate criticism of Israel.

SECTION II

**INVESTIGATING SOCIAL MEDIA
REGULATION OF HATE SPEECH**

Situation Assessment

2

Investigating Social Media Regulation of Hate Speech: Situation Assessment

In recent years, the potential threat posed by social media to democracy has become a significant challenge for public policy makers. The Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data scandal, revelations of foreign interference in the democratic process, large-scale dissemination of hate speech, and the rampant spread of fake news and misinformation surrounding elections and the Covid-19 pandemic, have all contributed to damaging public trust in social platforms. However, the relationship between social media and both governmental and non-governmental actors has entered a new era and resulted in the establishment of new rules. The growing recognition of structural issues on these platforms has prompted governments and civil society actors to commit to building a safer internet by encouraging collaborative work with tech giants and by initiating legislation and imposing heavy sanctions. This paradigm shift has led to a more collaborative approach and greater accountability from social media platforms. However, in the global internet era, when hate speech and fake news propagate faster than moderate discourse and authoritative content, the regulation of the virtual space remains an enormous transnational challenge requiring greater international cooperation that could prove fundamental for providing an effective strategy. This chapter will focus on social media regulation of hate speech and will seek to assess its effectiveness.

Lack of Internet Regulation Fuels Hatred and Violence

- Over the years, there has been an increase of awareness and recognition regarding the major role of the internet and social media in the proliferation of all forms of hatred and as a vector and amplifier of radicalization.
- Extremists have made great use of the web as a propaganda tool to spread radical ideas, mobilize supporters, outreach beyond their base, and recruit terrorists.
- The lack of regulation of the virtual sphere contributed to the internationalization and transnationalization of White Nationalism and Islamism by connecting extremists from all over the world.
- Many elements indicate that online hate generates real-world violence. An analysis of the data within ACMS shows several strong correlations between the intensity of antisemitic activity online and antisemitic activity in the real-world.

Adoption of EU Code of Conduct and New Digital Service Act

The European Commission has stood firmly against all forms of antisemitism. A comprehensive legislative European framework ensures protection from violence, discrimination, and expressions of hostility motivated by antisemitism, and criminalizes Holocaust denial and distortion across Europe.²⁹ An important legal tool is the 2008 Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.³⁰ In May 2016, the European Commission launched the Code of Conduct³¹ together with four major IT companies in an effort to respond to the proliferation of racist and xenophobic hate speech online. To this date, eight companies have adhered to the code; notably Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Microsoft, Instagram, Dailymotion, Snapchat, TikTok, and Jeuxvideo.com.

In June 2020, the European Commission released the results of its fifth evaluation³² of the 2016 Code of Conduct. The results are considered “overall positive” with IT companies assessing 90% of flagged content within 24 hours and removing 71% of the content deemed to be illegal hate speech. The report specifies that “the monitoring exercise shows that the removal of content for serious cases of deemed illegal hate speech is very significant. Content that calls for murder or violent acts against certain groups is largely removed in most of the identified cases. Whereas content using degrading, defamatory words or pictures to name certain social groups or individuals belonging to such groups are still removed in smaller proportions.” However, several elements indicate that a large part of hate speech is not flagged and therefore remains online. The report also notes that the platforms need to further improve transparency and feedback to users.

Recently, the European Commission has proposed to make hate speech and hate crime a Eurocrime. The legal framework will be further strengthened by the so-called Digital Service Act³³ package, which encompass a single set of new rules applicable across the whole EU and aims at modernizing the current legal framework for digital services. “The European Commission aims for a harmonized, clear set of due-diligence obligations for online platforms, redress mechanisms, accountability measures, and cooperation obligations with public authorities. The Act will also ensure greater transparency on how platforms moderate content, on advertising, and on algorithmic processes,” said Paul Nemitz, principal adviser in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission.

²⁹ European legislative framework ensuring protection of Jewish people and countering antisemitism, <http://bit.ly/3b2Gpvk>.

³⁰ Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law: <http://bit.ly/3ofM1Gm>

³¹ European Commission, The Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online, 2016: <https://bit.ly/2X9UoY3> <http://bit.ly/3oePjcF>

³² European Commission, 5th monitoring round of the Code of Conduct, 22 June 2020: <http://bit.ly/3nf155R> <http://bit.ly/3oeDT99>

³³ European Commission, The Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act, December 2020: <http://bit.ly/2L43ljd>

Social Media's Latest Policies Against Hate Speech

2019-2020 Highlights

- March 2019 - Facebook ban white nationalism and separatism content³⁴
- June 2019 - YouTube bans Holocaust denial and supremacist content³⁵
- September 2019 - Twitter bans 'dehumanizing' posts toward religious groups³⁶
- June 2020 - Facebook will prohibit hate speech in its ads³⁷
- July 2020 - Twitter launches crackdown on conspiracy group 'QAnon'³⁸
- July 2020 - Twitter updates hate speech policy to include links to 'hateful' content³⁹
- August 2020 - Facebook and Instagram ban antisemitic conspiracy theories⁴⁰
- September 2020 - TikTok joins EU code of conduct against hate speech⁴¹
- October 2020 - Facebook bans Holocaust denial posts⁴²
- October 2020 - TikTok moves to crack down on antisemitism⁴³
- October 2020 - Twitter CEO says Holocaust denial is still allowed⁴⁴
- December 2020 - Twitter expands hate speech rules to include race and ethnicity⁴⁵
- December 2020 - Facebook to change hate speech policy to better protect Jews, Blacks, and other minorities⁴⁶

³⁴ <http://bit.ly/3nkY8AM>

³⁵ <https://blog.youtube/news-and-events/our-ongoing-work-to-tackle-hate>

³⁶ Twitter Safety: <http://bit.ly/39fOF8T>

³⁷ <http://cnb.cx/2LgkUwa>

³⁸ <http://bit.ly/3odoK7O>

³⁹ Twitter Support: <https://bit.ly/38f16lT>

⁴⁰ <http://bit.ly/358VaZO>

⁴¹ <http://reut.rs/3b4fzmx>

⁴² <http://cnn.it/3hIRnHN>

⁴³ TikTok Newsroom: <http://bit.ly/3rWocp5>

⁴⁴ <http://bit.ly/3rVumGf>

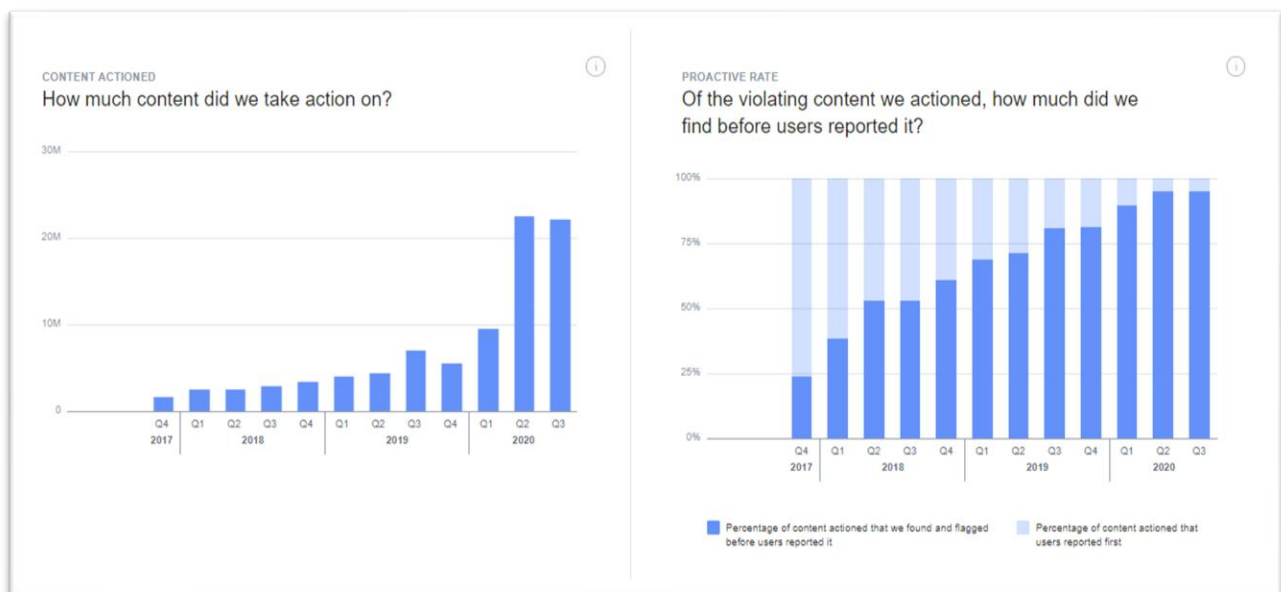
⁴⁵ <http://bit.ly/3hGsSe0>

⁴⁶ <http://wapo.st/2LgIKZQ>

Assessing Social Media's Progress in Hate Speech Regulation via Data from Transparency Reports

1. The Case of Facebook and Instagram

In November 2020, Facebook released its latest Transparency Report for the first half of 2020.⁴⁷ The policies on hate speech apply to both Facebook and Instagram. The report shows that the company proactively detects about 95% of hate speech content they remove. Those results constitute a significant improvement when considering Facebook's previous proactive detection rate--only 23.6% in Q4 of 2017. "Proactive detection technology" uses artificial intelligence to detect violating content as it is posted and remove it before other users can see it. Furthermore, the company for the first-time disclosed numbers on the prevalence of hate speech on its platform, saying that out of every 10,000 content views in the third quarter, 10 to 11 included hate speech. It has also reported a sharp increase in the number of posts it removed for promoting hate speech across its apps: 6.5 million pieces of content were removed in the third quarter of 2020 whereas only 645,000 were removed in the last quarter of 2019. Meanwhile, Instagram removed 3.2 million in the second quarter compared to 6.5 million in the third.



Source: Facebook Transparency Report.⁴⁸

The web giant insists that advancements in AI technologies have allowed them to proactively detect and remove more hate speech over time. However, Facebook's critics remain unconvinced that it is detecting and willing to remove enough hateful content. It should be noted that Facebook's transparency report does not provide country-specific information about its moderation practices

⁴⁷ Facebook Newsroom: <http://bit.ly/38doNek>.

⁴⁸ Facebook transparency report: <https://transparency.facebook.com/>.

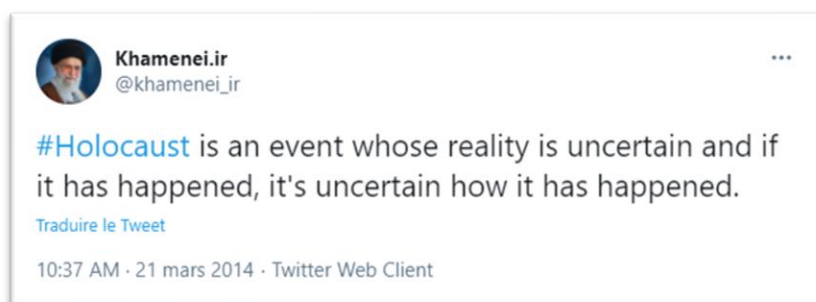
or any hate speech categorization by type or by specific communities, leaving many questions unanswered: what proportion of removed hate speech contains antisemitic or anti-Black rhetoric? Which type of antisemitism (Islamic antisemitism, far-right antisemitism, conspiracy theories, holocaust denial, etc.) was tackled? What sort of training do content moderators receive? More transparency would allow a better situation assessment and help governments and civil society organizations tackle this phenomenon more effectively.

2. The Case of Twitter

In August 2020, Twitter published its biannual transparency reports covering the second half of 2019.⁴⁹ The report shows a 95% increase in accounts actioned for violating its abuse policy, a 47% increase in account locks and suspensions, and a 54% increase in accounts actioned for violating hateful conduct policies, among others. Twitter attributed the increase in actions taken on accounts demonstrating hateful conduct, in part to its new “dehumanization policy” announced in July 2019. However, similar to Facebook, Twitter does not provide any insights about how specific countries, communities, or hate speech subcategorizations are impacted by its moderation policies.

The Case of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei – Twitter

Twitter has faced growing backlash over widespread hate speech on its platform and over its inaction over Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who regularly uses his several Twitter accounts⁵⁰ to disseminate unequivocal hate speech content and incite violence. Khamenei is considered a leading state sponsor of terror and openly supports terror-classified movements such as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah. He has called for Israel's destruction on numerous occasions and frequently refers to Israel as a “cancerous tumor.” In 2014, Khamenei took to twitter to share a nine-point plan explicitly proposing the elimination of Israel.⁵¹ Iran's Supreme Leader has also been accused of endorsing genocide of Jews following the publication of a poster on his website that used the words “final solution” in calling for Israel's destruction.⁵²



⁴⁹ Twitter Transparency Center: <https://transparency.twitter.com/>

⁵⁰ Khamenei has several official Twitter accounts in multiple languages which include Persian, English, French, Spanish, Italian and Arabic. His main Twitter account has nearly 888K followers. https://twitter.com/khamenei_ir

⁵¹ Khamenei, 2014. Twitter. <https://bit.ly/2JlezZV>

⁵² <http://bit.ly/2Y8SzuW>



Critics urge Twitter to permanently ban all accounts associated with Iran’s Supreme Leader and accuse the platform of holding double standards in favor of Khamenei. Indeed, none of Khamenei’s posts calling for explicit violence against Israel or questioning the Holocaust⁵³ have ever been deleted, flagged, or labeled by the company’s moderation teams, even though attaching a special label to tweets deemed ‘problematic’ or ‘potentially harmful’ have become common practice for the company. A Twitter official told a Knesset Committee in July 2020 that the tweets in which Khamenei calls for Israel’s destruction do not violate the company’s rules against hate speech and indicated that they are considered mere “foreign policy saber-rattling.”⁵⁴

In October 2019, Twitter clarified its rules for politicians and said it would continue to take a tolerant approach to objectionable tweets by world leaders, arguing that their messages are often of public interest.⁵⁵ Yet the company has drawn some red lines that apply to world leaders and claims it will take action if tweets promote terrorism. In May 2020, Khamenei advocated for Israel’s destruction on several occasions on Twitter, including an explicit call for “armed resistance” (terrorism) against Israel⁵⁶. Twitter did not take any action.

⁵³ Khamenei has repeatedly questioned the Holocaust on his Twitter main account. Some examples:

Khamenei, 2020. Twitter: <https://bit.ly/2KbKan7>

Khamenei, 2014. Twitter: <https://bit.ly/3sSjrh2>

Khamenei, 2012. Twitter: <https://bit.ly/3pfvpOb>

⁵⁴ <http://bit.ly/3pHXbDY>

⁵⁵ <http://cnn.it/3ogJKKO>

⁵⁶ Khamenei, 2020. Twitter: <https://bit.ly/3ojAmGs>

Khamenei, 2020. Twitter: <https://bit.ly/2Jlmera>

Khamenei, 2020. Twitter: <https://bit.ly/2L0co4E>

Khamenei, 2020. Twitter: <https://bit.ly/3iFxpW>

Khamenei, 2020. Twitter: <https://bit.ly/3phDJy0>

3. The Case of YouTube

YouTube has released its latest Community Guidelines Enforcement report,⁵⁷ which outlines all the actions the platform took for rule violations between July and September 2020. The report reveals that 1,804,170 channels and 32,900,267 videos were removed during this time period.

Approximately 85% of channel terminations were a result of accounts being dedicated to spam, misleading information, and scams. However, the YouTube transparency report, like that of Facebook and Twitter, does not provide any insights about how specific communities or types of hate speech are impacted by their moderation policies. In spite of this, a YouTube spokesperson gave some indications in June 2020: “After updating our guidelines last year to better address content that spreads hateful conspiracy theories, we saw a 5x spike in video removals and have terminated over 25,000 channels for violating our hate speech policies.”⁵⁸

In addition, YouTube recently banned some of the site’s most notorious far-right users, including former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, alt-right figurehead Richard Spencer, and libertarian “race realist” Stefan Molyneux. The video platform also terminated the channels of iconic French antisemitic activists Alain Soral and Dieudonné.

Audit of Hate Speech Regulation Effectiveness and the Question of Alternative Platforms

1. Positive Trend, Yet Cautious Optimism

Although social media platforms can and should do significantly more to address hateful content dissemination, mainstream platforms seem to have managed to expel their most openly extremist users. ACMS shows a marked downward trend in the number of antisemitic messages published on Twitter between 2018 and 2020: 4.12 million antisemitic posts were recorded in English, French, German, and Arabic in 2018, 3.66 million in 2019, and around 2 million in 2020. It represents a 50% decrease from 2018 to 2020. This sharp decline seems to have impacted mainly *Holocaust Denial & Distortion* and *Classic Antisemitism* discourse while several elements signal a weaker social media scrutiny of radical anti-Zionism; a narrative which constitutes a highly significant pattern of contemporary manifestations of antisemitism.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Google Transparency Report: <http://bit.ly/39fQoLp>

⁵⁸ <http://tcrn.ch/2MBXtOJ>

⁵⁹ It should be noted that Social media platforms have not adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.

2. Migration to Alternative Social Media Ecosystem

However, the increased regulation on mainstream social media sites over the years may have pushed many extremists onto “alternative” online platforms⁶⁰ which became a haven for white nationalists and neo-Nazis. ACMS recorded nearly 127K antisemitic messages posted in 2020 on 4Chan, 8Kun, BitChute, Stormfront, Gab, and Minds. The great majority of the content originated from the US and shows a high prevalence of far-right and conspiracy rhetoric. ACMS also shows that the proportion of content glorifying Nazi ideology, denying or distorting the Holocaust, and calling for violence against Jews/Zionists/Israel seems significantly higher within this alternative social media ecosystem than within mainstream platforms (see images below).

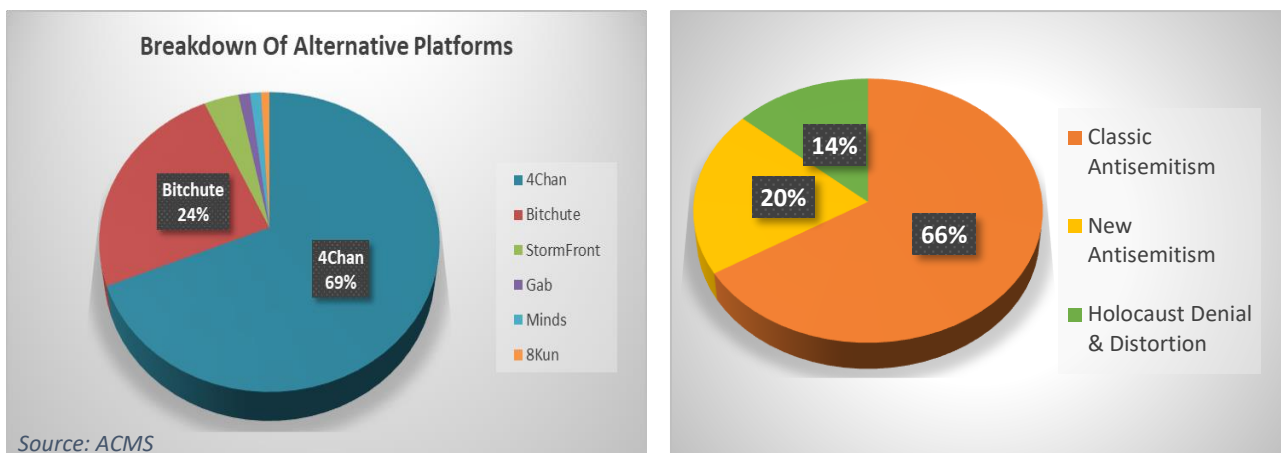
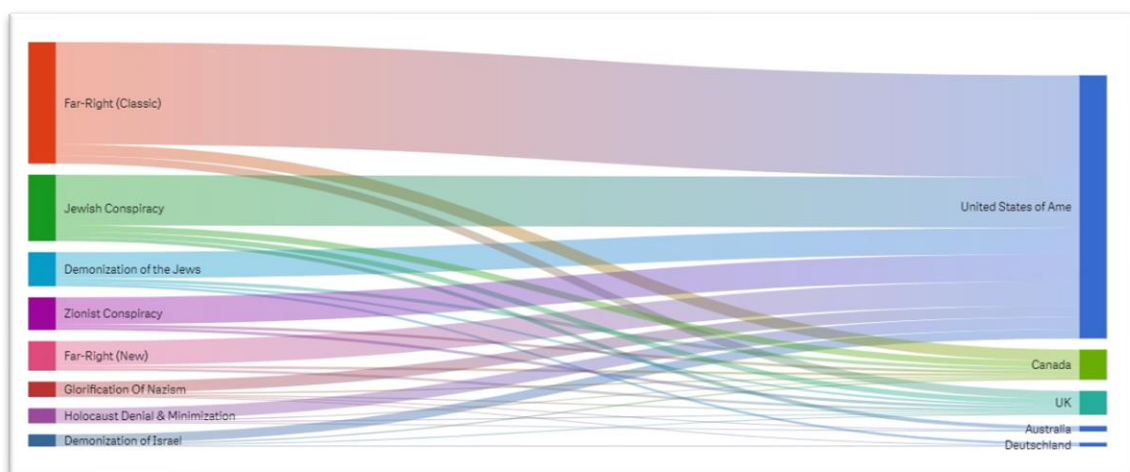


Image 1 [left]: Breakdown of antisemitic discourse by alternative social media platforms, 2020

Image 2 [right]: Breakdown of main category discourse within alternative social media platforms, 2020

The alternative platforms monitored by ACMS are: 4Chan, 8Kun, BitChute, Stormfront, Gab, and Minds



Breakdown of subcategory discourse within alternative social media platforms by country, 2020 (Source: ACMS)

⁶⁰ Alternative platforms include VK, Parler, Telegram, Gab, 4Chan, 8Kun, Stormfront, Minds, BitChute, etc.

Additionally, Telegram has faced increased scrutiny as extremists flock to it amid mainstream social media crackdowns on hate speech and disinformation. The encrypted messaging app said it has surpassed 500 million monthly active users in the first week of January 2021 amid growing anxiety over the power of Tech giants and privacy concerns. A recent paper⁶¹ demonstrated that the start of Telegram's explosive growth coincides with the mass bans of far-right users on mainstream social media platforms. "The observed patterns of network evolution suggest that the simultaneous migration of these actors to Telegram has allowed them to swiftly recreate their connections," according to the researchers. Another study seems to partly corroborate this theory: Telegram channels associated with white supremacy and racism grew by more than 6,000 users over the month of March according to data shared with TIME by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue,⁶² a London-based think tank that monitors extremism and disinformation. However, "while Telegram channels tend to reach relatively few people compared to larger social media platforms, experts say they are equally if not more dangerous as hubs for extremists," noted TIME.

⁶¹ Aleksandra Urman & Stefan Katz (2020) What they do in the shadows: examining the far-right networks on Telegram, Information, Communication & Society, DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2020.1803946

⁶² <http://bit.ly/38fdh22>

SECTION III

ANTISEMITISM BY COUNTRY

2020 OFFLINE TRENDS & INCIDENTS

3

Antisemitism by Country—2020 Offline Incidents and Trends

UNITED STATES

1. General Trends

Throughout 2020, multiple events had significant effects on American society which had repercussions on American Jews and the antisemitism directed towards them. The most prominent of these was the Coronavirus pandemic and the nationwide lockdowns it triggered. Other key incidents included nationwide protests in support of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and a divisive national election. With the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic and nationwide lockdowns, 2020 saw an increase of online antisemitism (see ACMS report) and an explosion of various antisemitic conspiracy theories related to the three aforementioned major events. A survey conducted by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in September 2020 questioned American Jews and non-Jews, and found that a majority of American Jews believe antisemitism is a persistent and worsening problem in the United States.⁶³ Interestingly, while non-Jews also believe antisemitism in the U.S. is a problem, they don't see it as getting worse, and 65% don't believe Jews are the arbiters of defining antisemitism.⁶⁴ It should be noted that this is an interesting double standard applied to American Jews, since every other American minority is considered the sole arbiter in defining racism towards them. In addition to this, the survey also found that American Jews are attuned to antisemitism in Islamic extremism, the far-right, and the far-left; but do not see them as equal.⁶⁵

Official statistics regarding the extent of antisemitic incidents in the United States has not yet been released for 2020. However, according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the American Jewish community suffered the highest level of antisemitic incidents in 2019 since tracking began in 1979.⁶⁶ A total of 2,107 attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions across the country took place in 2019,

⁶³ "The State of Antisemitism in America 2020: AJC's Survey of American Jews," American Jewish Committee, November 2020, page 2, <https://bit.ly/380xszp>.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pages 7-8.

⁶⁵ Ibid., page 5.

⁶⁶ "Antisemitic Incidents Hit All-Time High in 2019," Reports, ADL, May 12, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3oLrlG0>.

representing an increase of 12% when compared to the previous year, while assaults increased by 56% compared to the previous year. Throughout 2019, there were 61 cases of antisemitic assault, 1,127 cases of harassment, and 919 cases of vandalism; and while incidents were reported in every state except Alaska and Hawaii, the states with the largest Jewish populations tended to have the highest numbers of incidents. In 2019, these were New York (430), New Jersey (345), California (330), Massachusetts (114), and Pennsylvania (109). When combined, these incidents account for almost 45% of the total number of antisemitic incidents in the U.S.⁶⁷ Additionally, the 2019 Hate Crime report by the FBI released in November 2020, which details hate crime statistics, shows antisemitic hate crimes in 2019 accounted for 63% of religion-based hate crimes. The report listed 953 religion-based hate crimes with an anti-Jewish bias, which represents an increase of 14% from 835 in 2018. The FBI's report is based on voluntary local law enforcement reporting to the Bureau, and in 2019, 86% of participating agencies didn't report a single hate crime to the FBI, including at least 71 cities with populations of over 100,000 inhabitants, so the scope of the problem is likely much larger. However, an examination of the FBI's statistics reveals an overwhelming trend in which the proportion of anti-Jewish hate crimes markedly exceeds other religious bias hate crimes (see table below).

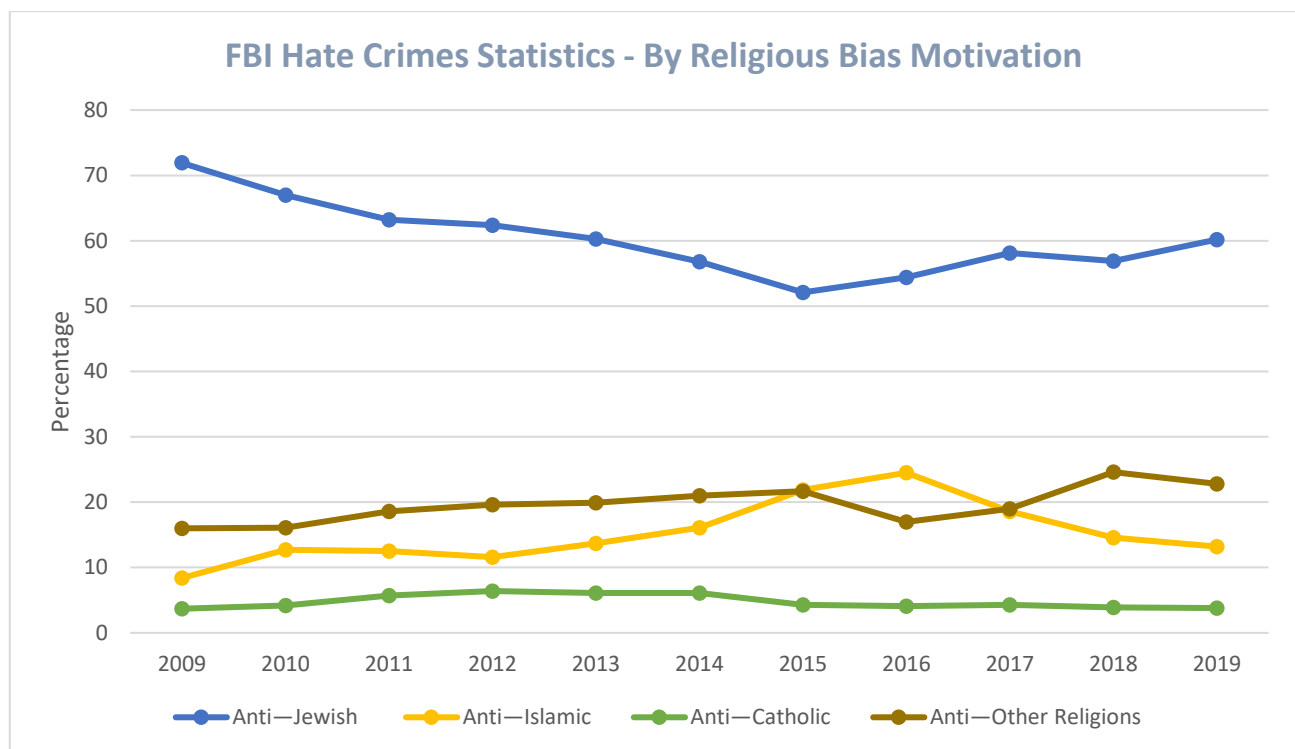


Table: The evolution of the proportion of anti-Jewish hate crimes compared to other religious bias hate crimes from 2009-2019.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

2. Coronavirus-Related Antisemitism in the US

Antisemitism related to Coronavirus gained traction almost immediately after the outbreak spread globally. Coronavirus antisemitism has emanated from both the Far-Left and the Far-Right. Far-left coronavirus antisemitism is centered around Israel and allegations that Israel is actively and purposefully spreading the virus to Palestinians as a tactic to harm and subjugate them. Antisemitic far-left activists have also compared Israel to the virus or called the State of Israel the ‘real virus.’ While the Far-Right targeted additional minorities with conspiracy theories regarding the coronavirus, such as Asians, coronavirus antisemitism centered around conspiracies claiming that Covid-19 is a Jewish or Zionist plot perpetrated for a multitude of reasons, including to seek control of the US government, to annihilate and control civilian populations, and to advance secret “liberalist agendas,” such as climate change reforms. Various antisemitic conspiracy theories related to the virus have spread across multiple social media platforms. The most common theories claim that “globalist Jews,” most notably George Soros and the Rothschild family, developed the Coronavirus as a way to control world governments, commit ethnic cleansing, or profit from vaccines and stock market manipulations.

3. The White Supremacist Threat

According to the Department of Homeland Security’s first annual report, which was released in October 2020, White Supremacists are the most persistent and lethal domestic threat in the United States.⁶⁸ Therefore, it should be noted that White Supremacists have been capitalizing on the Coronavirus since its outbreak and using it to encourage antisemitism and violence towards Jews. In March, shortly after Coronavirus lockdowns were implemented in major cities such as New York, the FBI reported that they intercepted messages sent by neo-Nazis and White Supremacists encouraging infected members to try and pass on the virus to Jews and police officers by visiting places where the groups congregate; such as supermarkets, offices, businesses, or places of worship. Infected members were also advised to attack targets with spray bottles containing body fluids.⁶⁹ Additionally, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) reported that White Supremacist extremists who call themselves “Accelerationists” were using the Coronavirus outbreak opportunistically. They sought to draw in new recruits and encourage current supporters to mobilize by harnessing people’s fear and distrust of the government during the outbreak.⁷⁰ On March 24th, the FBI thwarted a Coronavirus-inspired bomb attack by an antisemitic White Supremacist “Accelerationist” who was attempting to blow up a hospital



Image: Neo-Nazi at a coronavirus restriction protest carries a sign which reads, "the real plague" in reference to the image of a rat wearing a yarmulke pictured with the Star of David.

⁶⁸ Homeland Threat Assessment, FBI, October 2020, page 18, <https://bit.ly/2W8G55B>.

⁶⁹ “FBI Says Extremists Are Urging Spread of Coronavirus to Jews, Police,” Times of Israel, March 23, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2WaAgo9>.

⁷⁰ “White Supremacists See Coronavirus as an Opportunity,” SPLC, March 26, 2020, <https://bit.ly/37Yo9jE>.

in Missouri. Timothy Wilson, who died in a firefight with the FBI, was active in neo-Nazi organizations such as the “National Socialist Movement” and “Vorherrschaft Division.”⁷¹ Neo-Nazis and White Supremacists have also infiltrated anti-Coronavirus restriction protests throughout the US to spread antisemitic beliefs and conspiracy theories. In one instance, a known neo-Nazi who was photographed carrying an antisemitic sign (see image to the right) at a Columbus protest against Coronavirus restrictions was arrested a few days later after walking into a convenience store on May 3rd with a hatchet and machete. He asked where the Jews were before declaring that he was going to Kent State University to find them.⁷²

4. The Black Lives Matter Movement: Jewish Solidarity, Albeit Controversies

4.1 Jewish Solidarity Against Anti-Black Racism

The killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin sparked nationwide protests against systemic racism and police brutality aimed at Black Americans. The protests were largely led by the BLM movement; a political and social non-violent movement without a unified structure or overarching leadership that advocates against racial inequality and police brutality in the U.S. According to ACLED, a non-profit organization that tracks all reported political violence and protest events across the globe, there were more than “7,750 demonstrations linked to the BLM movement across more than 2,440 locations in all 50 states and Washington, DC.”⁷³ While some protests did indeed turn violent, ACLED reports that over 93% of the BLM protests between May 26, 2020-August 22, 2020 were peaceful. American Jews generally support the BLM movement, and on August 28th, 627 American Jewish organizations and synagogues signed a full-page ad in the New York Times declaring “We speak with one voice when we say, unequivocally: Black lives matter.”⁷⁴ According to Audrey Sasson, the executive director of *Jews for Racial and Economic Justice*, the decision to publish the ad was made in response to antisemitic conspiracies emanating from the far-right which claimed the BLM movement was being manipulated by “globalist and Marxist” Jews (mainly George Soros) in an antisemitic attempt to undermine the movement.⁷⁵ Additionally, the date chosen to publish the ad was of symbolic importance since it marked the 57th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington.

⁷¹ “Missouri Man Planned to Bomb Hospital During Pandemic to Get Attention for White Supremacist Views,” NBC News, March 30, 2020, <https://nbcnews.to/3gJqnaD>.

⁷² “Alleged Neo-Nazi Who Carried Anti-Semitic Sign at COVID-19 Protest Pleads Guilty to Gun Charge,” Ohio Capital Journal, September 16, 2020, <https://bit.ly/348NWEK>.

⁷³ “Demonstrations & Political Violence in America: New Data for Summer 2020,” ACLED, September 2020, page 2, <https://bit.ly/2Kjg80n>.

⁷⁴ “‘Black Lives Matter,’ Declare Groups Representing Majority of US Jews in NYT Ad,” Times of Israel, August 29, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2K3Tb1n>.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

4.2 Antisemitism within the BLM Movement

While a study examining BLM protests in the U.S. found that the movement is “overwhelmingly peaceful”⁷⁶ and champions for equality and human rights, it has been criticized for a protest which turned into a violent and destructive riot on May 30th in Fairfax, California; home to the oldest Jewish community in Los Angeles and largely populated by ultra-Orthodox Jews. During the riot, several kosher stores, synagogues, religious schools, and Jewish-owned businesses were targeted, vandalized, and looted. In some cases, these offenses took place while protestors chanted antisemitic slogans, such as “F**k the police and kill the Jews.”⁷⁷ The Fairfax riot was led by Melina Abdullah, the lead organizer of the BLM movement in LA who also has been accused of antisemitism and is a fervent and outspoken supporter of the antisemitic ‘Nation of Islam’ movement and its leader, Louis Farrakhan. It should be noted that since the resurgence of the BLM movement, numerous prominent celebrities with massive social media audiences reaching into the hundred-thousands or millions shared antisemitic conspiracy theories and voiced support for Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam on various social media platforms. Many of the celebrities, which included musicians, actors, comedians, and prominent athletes, received widespread backlash over their support of Farrakhan or the dissemination of antisemitic conspiracy theories and were largely condemned.

That being said, there are two main justifications circulating in the BLM movement for why the targeting committed during the Fairfax riot is excusable. The first is the claim that Jews financed, orchestrated, or perpetuated the slave trade for profits. Though this has been widely disproven by numerous historians, the claim recently gained popularity on social media. Additionally, it is widely spread in various books published by the Nation of Islam. The second justification comes from those taking advantage of the BLM protests to vilify the State of Israel by claiming it’s responsible for George Floyd’s death. This is the same faction that equates racism in the US with the plight of the Palestinian people.

Surge in BLM-Inspired Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories

A range of antisemitic conspiracy theories gained renewed popularity during the BLM movement and protests. An established conspiracy theory claiming Israel is responsible for police brutality due to joint training exercises was repurposed in various ways for the 2020 BLM movement. The claims have spread globally across social media and blame the killing of George Floyd on various branches of Israeli security forces. Pro-Palestinian and BDS activists have used the claim to coopt the



Image: Protesters at a BLM rally carry a sign which reads, “NYPD=KKK=IDF.”

⁷⁶ “Demonstrations & Political Violence in America,” ACLED, page 5, <https://bit.ly/2Kjg80n>.

⁷⁷ “A Farrakhan Supporter Led the LA Black Lives Matter Rally That Became a Pogrom,” Forward Mag, June 19, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3gPvKVB>.

BLM movement by claiming the technique used to kill Floyd was tested and used on Palestinians. In one example, the US CPR, which represents pro-BDS groups across the country and has more than 50K Twitter followers, tweeted, “The Israeli military trains US police in racist and repressive policing tactics, which systematically targets black and brown bodies.” In another, Charlotte Greensit, who recently became an editor at *The New York Times*, shared a tweet blaming Israel for American police brutality. Her tweet was deleted shortly after.

Additional antisemitic conspiracy theories related to the recent BLM movement include:

- The claim that Jews bolster and perpetuate systemic racism for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways, such as:
 - For profit and enjoyment by controlling the music and entertainment industries
 - To force a secret agenda on the population by controlling the news media
 - To exploit and subjugate Blacks by positioning themselves in positions of power
- Various conspiracies regarding Jewish billionaire George Soros, which include:
 - Claims that he is behind the BLM protests by orchestrating or staging Floyd’s death to create racial tension and social upheaval so he can overthrow the US government
 - Allegations that he stashed bricks to be used as weapons during the protests
 - Claims that he’s using the BLM movement to orchestrate the federalization of police
 - Accusations of him paying and/or transporting both BLM protestors and counter-protestors
- Claims that Black people are the ‘real’ Jews, and that ‘current’ Jews are imposters who stole their heritage in order to control and enslave them. Claims that Jesus was a Black Jew are used to support this idea.

5. Dissecting Antisemitism in the QAnon Conspiracy Theory

The QAnon conspiracy theory can be traced back to October 2017 when an anonymous user who claimed to be a high-ranking U.S. official posted cryptic messages about Hillary Clinton to the 4-chan message-board. According to a report by the World Jewish Congress (WJC), “the core of the myth asserts that an anonymous individual, ‘Q’, with a high-level U.S. intelligence security clearance, is leaking information about Trump’s secret war [against] a cabal run by criminal politicians and the Hollywood elite funded by George Soros and the Rothschild family.”⁷⁸ It alleges that this secret cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles is made up of leaders, bankers, and Hollywood “elites,” collectively referred to as the ‘Deep State,’ who secretly run a global child sex-trafficking and torture ring that excretes a supposedly life-extending chemical known as “Adrenochrome” from the blood of tortured children.⁷⁹ According to QAnon, the ultimate goal of the ‘Deep State’ is to rule the masses.

⁷⁸ “QAnon: A Conspiracy Myth,” World Jewish Congress, November 2020, <https://bit.ly/3naxSJX>.

⁷⁹ Ibid., page 3.

The theory claims that a battle between the ‘Deep State’ and President Donald Trump will result in a day of reckoning known as ‘the Storm,’ which will involve the mass arrest of corrupt politicians and journalists.

The QAnon conspiracy theory has antisemitism rooted in its core since its base beliefs can be traced to age-old antisemitic conspiracy theories centered around alleged Jewish ritual torture or murder, pedophilia, control, power, and usury. These antisemitic tropes include theories put forward by the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and antisemitic blood libel conspiracies which have merely been repackaged and rebranded for a modern audience. According to the WJC, “Protocols of the Elders of Zion are regularly cited [by QAnon adherents] as proof of their beliefs. Holocaust denial, distortion, and trivialization make regular appearances as well.”⁸⁰ Proponents of QAnon were traditionally members of the far-right, but the movement has been able to attract increasingly ‘mainstream’ individuals since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, according to *Roll Call*, two Republican candidates who either endorsed or signaled their support for the conspiracy theory won seats in Congress during the November 2020 elections.⁸¹ Supporters take the QAnon ‘Pledge,’ or ‘Oath,’ and declare “Where we go one, we go all” in allegiance to the movement.⁸² Though the theory began on 4-chan, the theory has since spread to various social media platforms and amassed a solid following which is continuing to grow. QAnon adherents have also been active in the real-world, sometimes violently. Numerous supporters inspired by QAnon have taken it upon themselves to carry out violent incidents involving threats,⁸³ blockades,⁸⁴ kidnappings,⁸⁵ and even murder.⁸⁶ While the theory began in the United States, it has since gained widespread popularity and amassed a rapidly-growing following worldwide and should thus continue to be monitored.

6. Antifa and Antisemitism

Antifa is a loosely organized anti-fascist movement with no unifying body made up of “a loose collection of groups, networks and individuals who believe in active, aggressive opposition to far

⁸⁰ Ibid., page 4.

⁸¹ “QAnon Goes to Washington: Two Supporters Win Seats in Congress,” *Roll Call*, November 5, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3gKubll>.

⁸² The full pledge states: “I, [insert name here], do solemnly swear, that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same, that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office of which I am about to enter, so help me God. Where we go one, we go all. God bless America.”

⁸³ “A QAnon Devotee Live-Streamed Her Trip to N.Y. to ‘Take Out’ Joe Biden,” *The Daily Beast*, April 30, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3qQ8P0V>.

⁸⁴ “Terrorism Suspect Makes Reference to Extremist Conspiracies,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, July 20, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2Wdl1to>.

⁸⁵ “Colorado Woman, Inspired by QAnon Conspiracy, Sought to Kidnap Her Own Child, Police Say,” *NBC News*, January 7, 2020, <https://nbcnews.to/2lLenJ5>.

⁸⁶ “He Wasn’t Seeking to Kill a Mob Boss. He Was Trying to Help Trump, His Lawyer Says,” *New York Times*, July 21, 2019, <https://nyti.ms/3oOTP1u>.

right-wing movements.”⁸⁷ Antisemitic conspiracy theories regarding the movement stem from the far-right and include claims that antifa is funded by globalists and rich Jews, such as George Soros, in an attempt to divide the American people so as to control and subvert non-Jews. The antisemitic theories also frequently contain economic antisemitism, references to a Jewish plot to establish a “New World Order” (NWO), and the claim that rich or far-left Jews use antifa to spark a civil war so they can destroy America.

The Antifa ideology centered around aggressive resistance is based on the belief that the Nazi party wouldn’t have come to power in Germany if they were met with violent public resistance in the 1920s and ‘30s. The movement began in Europe in the 1960s and reached the U.S. by the late 1970s. Today, antifa is active on various social media platforms and sees itself as an on-the-ground defense against groups and individuals they see as promoting fascism in the U.S. According to ‘The Torch Network,’ a group of antifa chapters, their aims are to protect against “racism, sexism, nativism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination against the disabled, the oldest, the youngest, and the most oppressed people.”⁸⁸ The group is loosely constructed and its ideology consists of a varied range of left-wing ideologies which unite around opposing fascism.⁸⁹

Mark Bray, a historian of Human Rights who wrote *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook*, explains that antifa members are typically from the far-left end of the political spectrum, and as a result, many members tend to be anti-Zionist and participate heavily in anti-Israel and pro-BDS protests, even though anti-Zionism is not a focus of the antifa movement.⁹⁰ Though antifa is a far-left group, Bray stresses that “the vast majority of antifa militants are radical anti-capitalists who oppose the Democratic Party.”⁹¹ The movement has been largely condemned for its violent tactics, with many arguing that it enables the far-right to portray themselves as victims being denied the right to freedom of speech or assembly, and thus allows white supremacists to claim they act in self-defense when protests become violent. Aside from physically confronting white supremacists, antifa activists engage in ‘doxing,’ which is the practice of revealing the identity and private information of far-right or white supremacist adversaries.⁹²

7. Antisemitism Surrounding Elections

Antisemitism surrounding American elections is not unusual. However, this year the election cycle was foreshadowed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the controversy surrounding various national and regional approaches to dealing with it, as well as nationwide unrest that took place over the summer in the aftermath of George Floyd’s killing. Therefore, antisemitism surrounding the November 3,

⁸⁷ “Who Are Antifa?,” ADL, <https://www.adl.org/antifa>.

⁸⁸ “Points of Unity,” The Torch Network, <https://torchantifa.org/points-of-unity/>.

⁸⁹ “Here’s What You Need to Know About the Anti-Fascist Group Antifa,” Jerusalem Post, June 1, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3qSXE7O>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ “Five Myths About Antifa,” Washington Post, September 11, 2020, <https://wapo.st/37ZQpCn>.

⁹² “Who Are Antifa?,” ADL.

2020 elections was the product of a country that was experiencing deep societal divisions while grappling with a recession; a phenomenon which frequently coincides with a rise in antisemitic conspiracy theories and economic antisemitism. As a result, antisemitism surrounding the election was manifested in two distinct ways.

7.1 Antisemitism Targeting Jewish Candidates

The first manifestation was antisemitism directed at Jewish candidates from across the country and political spectrum. In the months leading up to the elections, campaign posters and offices belonging to Jewish candidates were frequently vandalized with swastikas, antisemitic slurs, and hate speech. In the online world, Jewish candidates were excessively targeted with a deluge of antisemitic harassment and conspiracy theories on social media, where tropes regarding Jewish power and control, or antisemitic accusations that Jewish politicians couldn't be trustworthy because of their faith, was frequently spread. For example, in a study conducted by ADL which examined a sample of 5,954 antisemitic tweets containing various levels of antisemitic discourse directed at 30 Jewish incumbents up for re-election, they found that 48% of tweets displayed "a concerted effort at trying to portray Jewish incumbents as less patriotic and more dishonest...Many of these tweets also claimed that Jewish incumbents are Communists and Marxists in hiding, claimed dual loyalty of lawmakers, or questioned their Jewish faith if they were seen photographed next to Muslims."⁹³

7.2 Using Antisemitism to Influence American Voters

The second manifestation of antisemitism surrounding the election targeted American voters and attempted to shape their perception of Jewish candidates as fitting age-old antisemitic canards. At times, this took the form of Jewish candidates being photoshopped in an antisemitic manner in election pamphlets and flyers, such as with enlarged noses and surrounded by wads of money (see image 2 below). In addition to this, American voters were inundated with antisemitic conspiracy theories on social media and private messaging apps, such as WhatsApp or Telegram. Like the antisemitism directed at Jewish candidates, the conspiracies ranged in topics but mainly focused on dual loyalty and the claim that Jewish candidates are members of the "Deep State;" a conspiracy theory which asserts that rich Jews control the US government and banking systems for their own benefit at the expense of non-Jews. These theories were significantly amplified by QAnon (see section "QAnon") and some evidence suggests specific voter groups residing in "swing states" were hyper-targeted with these conspiracies in an effort to influence the result of the elections. For example, Eduardo Gamarra, a professor of Political Science and International Relations at Florida International University who has extensive experience polling Hispanic voters in Florida, reported that in the months leading up the national elections, Latin voters received an "onslaught" of

⁹³ "Online Hate Index Report: The Digital Experience of Jewish Lawmakers," ADL, October 6, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3a7vG2g>.

antisemitic misinformation in Spanish.⁹⁴ Since Hispanic voters in Florida make up approximately 17% of the state's electorate, and Florida is traditionally the largest and most contested swing state, the specific targeting of this community is not coincidental.

Examples of Antisemitism Surrounding the 2020 Elections



Image 1 (left): Antisemitic tweet directed at Jewish Democrat candidate Rep. Adam Schiff.⁹⁵

Image 2 (right): Antisemitic mailers featuring Jewish Republican candidate David Richter clutching money. The ads were sent by the House Majority PAC, a super-PAC closely associated with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The PAC has rejected the images are antisemitic and declined any wrongdoing.

8. Efforts at Combating Antisemitism

Though the IHRA working definition of antisemitism was adopted by the U.S. in May 2016,⁹⁶ there has been an uptick this year in the amount of American universities and institutions that have adopted it in an effort to combat antisemitism. They include Florida State University, New York University, and Arizona State University, just to name a few.

January: Attorney General Barr issued a directive to all United States Attorneys directing them to initiate or reinvigorate contacts with the Jewish community in their respective districts to reassure the Jewish community of the Department of Justice's commitment to protecting Jewish citizens. The memo directed the United States Attorneys to establish a point of contact in each of their offices for the Jewish community to report hate crimes or other discrimination.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ "'This is F---ing Crazy': Florida Latinos Swamped by Wild Conspiracy Theories," Politico, September 14, 2020, <https://politi.co/2WcjbtW>.

⁹⁵ The tweet is accompanied by a picture which advances a classic Judeo-Bolshevism antisemitic conspiracy theory known as "Holodomor" and claims "Holodomor [was] the Real Holocaust." It is also accompanied by a picture of a book entitled *Jews and the American Slave Trade* by Saul S. Friedman, which refutes claims by the Nation of Islam and Louis Farrakhan that Jews dominated the slave trade. It's likely the content of the book was unknown to the user who posted this since the book refutes antisemitic conspiracy theories. The text in the tweet reads: "Anti-goyim media demonized Trump because of his tough stance on illegal immigration. Schwartz & his tribesmen want to destroy goyim America by uncontrolled immigration. Schwartz's Bolshevik tribesman massacred millions of Gentiles."

⁹⁶ "Defining Antisemitism," U.S. State Department, <https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism/>.

⁹⁷ <https://bit.ly/3GJznwr>.

January: President Donald Trump signs bill authorizing \$375 million in grants for security protection against violence committed against houses of worship.⁹⁸

January: New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced \$45 million in additional funding will go to protect New York's religious-based institutions, including non-public schools and cultural centers.⁹⁹

February: Arrests of racially motivated violent extremists belong to the group 'Atomwaffen Division' were carried out in Washington, Texas, Florida, and Arizona. The members sought to attack Jews and Black journalists.¹⁰⁰

February: Los Angeles passes legislation to prevent hate crimes and offer security assessments to vulnerable institutions such as synagogues and cultural centers.¹⁰¹

May: President Donald Trump signed into law H.R. 943, the Never Again Education Act, which directs the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to develop and disseminate resources to promote a better understanding of the Holocaust, and authorizes Holocaust education programs to engage teachers and educational leaders.¹⁰²

May: Special envoy Elan Carr announces the U.S. government is working to combat antisemitism linked to the spread of the Coronavirus.¹⁰³

October: The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning the QAnon conspiracy theory, citing among other reasons its antisemitism.¹⁰⁴

October: The State Department virtually hosted "Ancient Hatred, Modern Medium." It was the first-ever U.S. Government-sponsored conference on combating online antisemitism.¹⁰⁵

October: The office of the U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism signed a historic memorandum of understanding to combat antisemitism together with the Kingdom of Bahrain's King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence.¹⁰⁶

November: The U.S. has joined Israel, the UK, Canada, and Australia in forming the Inter-Parliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Antisemitism.¹⁰⁷

December: The Senate passed a bill elevating the position of Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism to that of Ambassador.¹⁰⁸

9. Main Antisemitic Incidents in 2020

January - Brooklyn: 22-year-old Hasidic man punched and taunted by two women.¹⁰⁹

February: More than 50 JCCs nationwide received emailed bomb threats.¹¹⁰

⁹⁸ <https://bit.ly/34ci7ea>.

⁹⁹ <https://on.ny.gov/3mkfxc2>.

¹⁰⁰ <https://bit.ly/2WdF2kR>.

¹⁰¹ <https://bit.ly/3mnuNoQ>.

¹⁰² <https://bit.ly/3qMX0sx>.

¹⁰³ <https://bit.ly/37fLQEQ>.

¹⁰⁴ <https://bit.ly/3a7DirW>.

¹⁰⁵ <https://bit.ly/3qQhmB3>.

¹⁰⁶ <https://bit.ly/37egGO8>.

¹⁰⁷ <https://cnn.it/3meXaVR>.

¹⁰⁸ <https://bit.ly/37P8GDp>.

¹⁰⁹ <https://bit.ly/2JV1j4u>.

¹¹⁰ <https://bit.ly/385m45i>.

March: FBI reports White Supremacists encourage infected members to spread coronavirus to Jews and police officers by attacking them with spray bottles containing body fluids.¹¹¹

April - New Haven: Yale University Rabbi brutally beaten in antisemitic robbery.¹¹²

April - New York: Two Jewish teenagers were attacked in antisemitic ambush.¹¹³

April: 8Kun users coordinated antisemitic 'Zoombombing' campaign.¹¹⁴

May - Kent: Aryan Brotherhood member arrested for targeting Kent State University Jews with machete.¹¹⁵

May: Far-left, pro-BDS group blames Minneapolis police violence on Israel in online campaign.¹¹⁶

June - Carson City: Jewish man stabbed in Nevada by attacker shouting "Heir Hitler."¹¹⁷

June - Los Angeles: Synagogues and Jewish-owned businesses vandalized and looted during BLM protests where protesters chanted antisemitic obscenities.¹¹⁸

July - New York: An orthodox man was physically assaulted by a group of assailants yelling antisemitic slurs.¹¹⁹

July - Washington, DC: Protesters chant antisemitic slogans at joint pro-Palestine and BLM movement rallies.¹²⁰

July: Prominent celebrities spread antisemitic conspiracy theories and promote antisemitic Nation of Islam leader, Louis Farrakhan, who on July 4th spread antisemitism during a TV special.¹²¹

July - Topeka: Kansas newspaper equates mask mandate with the Holocaust.¹²²

August - New York: Two violent attacks on Jewish men are both investigated as hate crimes.¹²³

August - Newark: Fire at University of Delaware's Chabad Center for Jewish Life deemed an arson attack.¹²⁴

August - New York: A man was arrested for threatening to shoot-up a Jewish day camp. Upon investigation, authorities found an arsenal of weapons.¹²⁵

September: Two members of the "Boogaloo Bois" movement attempted to employ themselves as 'mercenaries' for Hamas in order to carry out attacks.¹²⁶

October - Coney Island: Orthodox man physically assaulted on boardwalk in New York.¹²⁷

October - San Diego: Teenager arrested on hate crime charges for antisemitic attack on Rabbi.¹²⁸

¹¹¹ <https://abcn.ws/2Wafipx>.

¹¹² <https://bit.ly/3qRz8nr>.

¹¹³ <https://7ny.tv/37hnf2q>.

¹¹⁴ ACMS Monthly Report, April 2020.

¹¹⁵ <https://bit.ly/2KkQEOf>.

¹¹⁶ <https://bit.ly/2LofJKz>.

¹¹⁷ <https://bit.ly/2JSRYu0>.

¹¹⁸ <https://bit.ly/2WckfxZ>.

¹¹⁹ <https://bit.ly/3gLDFgi>.

¹²⁰ <https://bit.ly/3aaeucy>.

¹²¹ ACMS Monthly Report, July 2020.

¹²² <https://bit.ly/3a8YA1V>.

¹²³ ACMS Monthly Report, August 2020.

¹²⁴ <https://bit.ly/37hnzya>.

¹²⁵ <https://7ny.tv/3gWfvX3>.

¹²⁶ <https://cnn.it/3nkX54r>.

¹²⁷ <https://bit.ly/38208YP>.

¹²⁸ <https://lat.ms/3nhIJBW>.

October: Numerous Jewish election candidates report antisemitic harassment online and antisemitic vandalism to their campaign signs and offices.¹²⁹

October: Jewish students at the University of Illinois file a complaint with the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights for "an unrelenting campaign of antisemitic harassment."¹³⁰

October: U.S. Marine Corps investigates soldier with neo-Nazi sympathies who antisemitically harassed a Jewish woman online.¹³¹

November - Columbus: Jewish couple from Ohio targeted in assault by neighbor who glorified Hitler, shouted death threats, and shattered their windows and door with rocks.¹³²

November: White supremacist who plotted attacks against a synagogue, the ADL, and an LGBTQ bar received two-year prison sentence. An FBI-led terror task force found rifles and components for an explosive device.¹³³

December - Lakewood: Dead pig found outside Rabbi's door in heavily orthodox New Jersey neighborhood.¹³⁴

December - Phoenix: Arizona neo-Nazi received prison sentence for plot to terrorize Jewish reporters.¹³⁵

December - Boise: Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial vandalized with swastika stickers.¹³⁶

December - Lexington: Driver shouting antisemitic slurs runs over a man attending a menorah lighting ceremony at Chabad of the Bluegrass in Kentucky.¹³⁷

¹²⁹ ACMS Monthly Report, October 2020.

¹³⁰ <https://bit.ly/385qaKZ>.

¹³¹ <https://bit.ly/349I9yE>.

¹³² <https://bit.ly/2K1vqam>.

¹³³ <https://wapo.st/2lQ3fL0>.

¹³⁴ <https://bit.ly/2KpZGeF>.

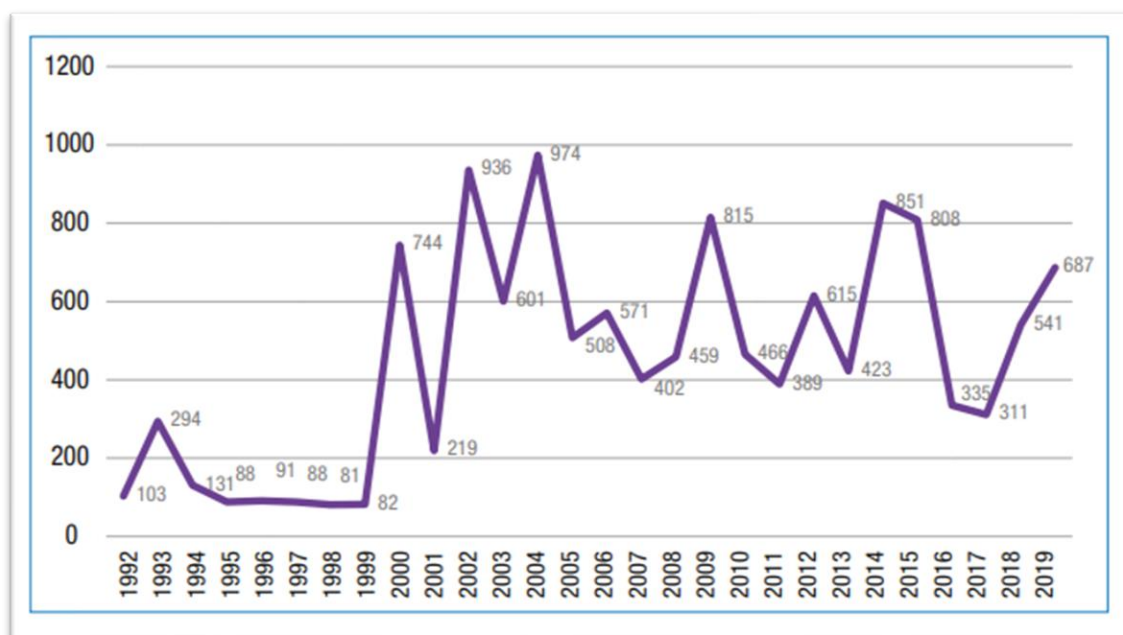
¹³⁵ <https://bit.ly/3njdVk3>.

¹³⁶ <https://bit.ly/2WfjGDw>.

¹³⁷ <https://bit.ly/37ZOJjc>.

FRANCE

1. General Trends



Antisemitic incidents recorded in France from 1992 to 2019.¹³⁸

According to the latest annual report released by the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, France's Ministry of Interior recorded a 27% rise in antisemitic incidents across the country in 2019 from 541 in 2018 to 687 in 2019.¹³⁹ The report highlights that the number of antisemitic acts that were filed decreased by 17% while antisemitic threats increased by 50%.¹⁴⁰ As in previous years, the great majority of these incidents were localized in the region of Paris. In parallel, racist and xenophobic incidents increased by 131% (1,142 incidents), anti-Muslim incidents increased by 54% (154 incidents), while anti-Christian incidents were not specifically categorized for 2019.

Furthermore, the Jewish Community Security Service (SPCJ) highlights that France has seen a 121% surge in the number of antisemitic incidents in 2019 compared to 2017.¹⁴¹ While the *Sentinelle Operation*, a military operation deployed in 2015 with the objective of protecting sensitive points of the territory from terrorism, largely contributed to the significant drop of antisemitic acts in 2016 (-58% compared to 2015), its redeployment in 2017 may have led to the increase of antisemitic incidents. In fact, the first phase of the *Sentinelle Operation* (2015-2017) involved static patrols

¹³⁸ 2019 Report on the fight against racism, antisemitism, and xenophobia by the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (under the authority of the Prime minister), June 2020. <https://bit.ly/3nMwSfh>

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Antisemitic acts include terror attacks (including attempts), homicides (including attempts), violence, arson (including attempts), desecrations, and vandalism. Antisemitic threats include oral threats, threatening gestures, insults, flyers, hate mail, and graffiti.

¹⁴¹ 2019 report on antisemitism in France by the Jewish Community Security Service (SPCJ). <https://bit.ly/37GC2nv>

around Jewish institutions, with a high visibility of police and military personnel. However, the dynamic approach to patrolling adopted in 2017 likely produced a lower deterrent effect, according to Francis Kalifat, president of the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France.¹⁴² Consequently, SPCJ urges the French government to implement a system integrating prevention and protection that is specifically tailored to the Jewish community.

As of the time of writing, official statistics for 2020 are not yet available. But the Inter-Ministerial Coordinator on combating racism, antisemitism, and anti-LGBT hatred, Frédéric Potier, indicates that the country has experienced “a sharp drop in the number of antisemitic incidents” in 2020 likely due to strict lockdown measures introduced by the government to contain the spread of Covid-19.¹⁴³ The combination of severe limitations on freedom of movement alongside the closure of Jewish institutions have likely made it harder for radicals to locate potential Jewish targets. However, the consequences of these restrictions on terrorist operational activities remain unclear.

2. Main Sources of the Antisemitic Threat: Radical Islam, Radical Left, and the Far-Right

As French society has grown more polarized, tensions between communities have deepened. Effects of the Covid-19 pandemic alongside a wave of shocking Islamist terror attacks have amplified already existing divisions within society. However, there was no structural evolution in 2020 of the sources of antisemitic attitudes which still predominantly emanate from radical and political Islam, the radical left, and the extreme right. Antisemitism unites radicals from different sides of the ideological spectrum who intersect and find points of convergence against Jews and/or Israel.

2.1 Radical Islam: The Main Source of Domestic Terrorism and Antisemitism

Home to the largest Jewish and Muslim populations in Europe, France has witnessed an explosion of antisemitic incidents since the 2000's, mostly perpetrated by radical Muslims. In parallel, the country has experienced a wave of large-scale Islamist terror attacks,¹⁴⁴ killing 263 people since 2012 and injuring hundreds more. The new Interior Minister, Gérald Darmanin, assessed that the main threat faced by the country was “the risk of terror of Sunni origin.”¹⁴⁵ In November 2020, authorities raised the level of terror threat to its maximum level¹⁴⁶ following three deadly attacks by radical Islamists which took place on French soil over a period of one month. Indeed, a

¹⁴² <http://bit.ly/383dhAW>

¹⁴³ France imposed a strict national lockdown between March 17 and May 11 and a second national lockdown from October 30 to December 15, immediately followed by a nightly curfew (08 pm-6.00 am)

¹⁴⁴ In the last five years, 20 Islamist terror attacks have been committed on French soil, 19 have failed and 61 have been thwarted.

¹⁴⁵ Press conference by France's Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin at the headquarters of the Directorate General of Internal Security (DGSI) on the threat terrorism currently poses to the country - August 31, 2020.

<http://bit.ly/3atkeOw>

¹⁴⁶ <http://bit.ly/38bWCes>

conjunction of interconnected events—the opening of the trial for the deadly 2015 attack against the *Charlie Hebdo* and Hyper Cacher supermarket, *Charlie Hebdo's* republication of the prophet Muhammed cartoons, and the instrumentalization of President Macron's crackdown on "Islamist separatism"—triggered widespread anger and outrage across the Muslim world. Radicals spread the false notion that Muslims were under attack by an alliance comprising Christian, Jewish, and Muslim apostates. In this highly tense context, Gérald Darmanin deployed more than 7,000 police and soldiers to protect Jewish services during Yom Kippur 2020,¹⁴⁷ assuring Jewish communities, which he said were "particularly targeted by Islamist attacks," of protection from the state. French Jews are regularly blamed for the rise of Islamophobic sentiments and are very high on the list of targets for radical Islamists.

Furthermore, more than 22,000 people¹⁴⁸ are registered in the identification file for preventing Islamist radicalization of a terrorist nature (FSPRT), a file created in March 2015 after the *Charlie Hebdo* and Hyper Cacher terror attacks. Among them, 8,132 cases are actively followed. However, Islamist extremists who recently hit France in a series of terror attacks were isolated and self-radicalized individuals unknown to the intelligence services. According to Darmanin, the threat posed by lone actors who are not necessarily linked to an established organization is a growing challenge for the intelligence services.¹⁴⁹ This new configuration differs from the well-planned and synchronized attacks which hit the country in the last decade by the Islamic State and an Al Qaeda affiliate. The latest 2020 EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report suggests that the French case reflects a broader trend shown at the EU scale. Indeed, the report assesses that "the greatest threat emanates from lone actors or small cells carrying out violence on their own accord without being directed by larger organizations."¹⁵⁰

2.2 Antisemitism in the Far-Left: When Political Islam Intersects with Progressive Fringes

Another main source of antisemitism in France emanates from extreme left fringes and often disguises itself behind the mask of human rights and egalitarianism. Indeed, following the Second World War, new forms of antisemitism have developed at the intersection of post-Marxist, 'Third-Worldist,' and 'Deconstructionist' movements. The common fight against imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, and class groups identified as systemically dominant, have thus manifested itself by a convergence of struggles between the radical left and radical Islam, and translated in some cases into virulent antisemitic forms of anti-Zionism. Indeed, the Jewish state is frequently described as the last bastion of colonialism and as an evil country that should be dismantled. This can also be accompanied by age-old antisemitic tropes, creating a hostile environment for French Jews.

¹⁴⁷ <http://bit.ly/3acA8wE>

¹⁴⁸ Press conference by France's Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin at the headquarters of the Directorate General of Internal Security (DGSI) on the threat terrorism currently poses to the country - August 31, 2020. <http://bit.ly/3atkeOw>

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ EU Terrorism Situation & Trend Report (Te-Sat) 2020, June 2020, <http://bit.ly/3nXTfid>

In parallel, Muslims may be perceived by some left-wing circles as the new proletariat that should be protected because of their supposed systemic victim status as opposed to Jews, who they see as embodying a systemically dominant group and a privileged capitalist bourgeoisie. Furthermore, in the neo-Marxism paradigm, racism is entirely systemic and institutional, and is seen as a function of class struggles and power. Within this conceptual framework, antisemitism may not be considered 'real racism' since dominant class groups cannot be victimized or subjected to discrimination.

2.3 Extreme-Right Wing: A "Terror Temptation" but a Disorganized Scene

Although individuals who hold extreme right-wing ideology have not murdered Jews in France in decades, the potential threat they constitute should not be minimized considering their historical background and their consubstantial radicality and violence. Since 2017, five extreme right-wing terror attacks have been foiled, according to Laurent Nuñez, head of the National Center of Intelligence and Counterterrorism.¹⁵¹ A 2005 note from intelligence services estimated the number of extreme right-wing activists and sympathizers to be between 2,500 and 3,500¹⁵². Police sources recently claim that approximately 1,000-2,000 extreme right-wing individuals are currently followed by intelligence services, including several hundred white supremacists.¹⁵³ Moreover, a parliamentary report investigating extreme right-wing groups point out a "terror temptation" among them in response to 2015 deadly Islamist terror attacks.¹⁵⁴ In fact, ultra-nationalist fringes seek to engage in a civilizational war with Islam and the existential threat posed by the so-called 'Great Replacement,' a theory claiming that the native white European population is being progressively replaced with African and Middle Eastern populations through mass immigration and multiculturalism. Antisemitic conspiracy theorists believe that this "white genocide" is being orchestrated by the Jews.

However, the extreme right-wing scene in France is described as "heterogeneous"¹⁵⁵ while old structured right-wing extremist and antisemitic movements have significantly lost influence and have been "disorganized" following their dissolution by the government.¹⁵⁶ According to France's DGSi domestic intelligence agency, old historical neo-Nazi organizations are "in decline since five or ten years," a positive trend mainly attributed by the DGSi to the series of administrative dissolutions made in 2013 which "have dealt a hard blow to these small groups."¹⁵⁷ Finally, although we noticed a significant rise of extreme-right activism in 2019, including the organization of several conferences

¹⁵¹ <http://bit.ly/3oX5wmN>

¹⁵² <http://bit.ly/2MwU1EL>

¹⁵³ <http://bit.ly/3oX5wmN>

Brajols, Action Défense Opérationnelle, OAS, but also dissolved neonazi groups such as Blood & Honor, Combat 18, Charlemagne Hammerskin and Bastion social, are all in intelligence services' sight.

¹⁵⁴ Parliamentary report investigating extreme right-wing groups, National Assembly website, June 2019
<http://bit.ly/3nRdQ7O>

¹⁵⁵ [EU Terrorism Situation & Trend Report \(Te-Sat\) 2020](#), Europol, June 2020.

¹⁵⁶ [Parliamentary report investigating extreme right-wing groups](#), National Assembly, June 2019.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

and events which brought together ultra-nationalists, white supremacists, and neo-Nazis from all over Europe and France, strict restrictions on freedom of movement imposed by the French government to combat the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic may have indirectly resulted in a significant decrease in these physical gatherings in 2020.

2.4 The Case of Marine Le Pen's National Rally

Marine Le Pen's National Rally (NR) achieved major electoral victories in recent years. According to a recent poll conducted by Ifop-Fiducial, Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen would be neck-and-neck in the first round of the 2022 presidential election, far ahead of all the other candidates. Several factors may explain the great popularity of Marine Le Pen's party, such as Islamist terror attacks that hit the country repeatedly in the last decade, a surge in public anxiety about immigration and globalization, public controversies surrounding the place of Islam in French society, cultural and socio-economic insecurity, and growing Euroskepticism.

Marine Le Pen has made major efforts in de-demonizing the party's image and in breaking with the party's antisemitic past, including expelling her father from National Front, a party he co-founded. In July 2020, she praised the memory of the victims of the 1942 Vel d'Hiv roundup, denouncing "the most abject and abominable expression of antisemitism." However, this strategy has led to the alienation of a part of the National Front electoral base characterized by its radical antisemitism, who calls her a "Jewish/Zionist puppet."

3. Governmental and Legal Crackdown on Antisemitism & Radicalization

3.1 Government Crackdown on "Islamist Separatism"

[The Beheading of Samuel Paty: Dissolution of Islamist Associations; Head of Pro-Hamas Group Arrested](#)

The beheading of Samuel Paty in a Paris suburb on October 16th, sparked deep shock across France and put the Jewish community on high alert. The history teacher had shown his students cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed in a civics class on freedom of expression after the caricatures were re-published by *Charlie Hebdo*. In total, three Islamist terror attacks were carried out over four weeks. As a response, President Emmanuel Macron unleashed a broad crackdown on individuals and groups accused of Islamist extremism and radicalization. Among other strong measures, the government announced the dissolution of the "Collectif Cheikh Yassine" (an active pro-Hamas group) due to its "direct implication in the assassination of Paty."¹⁵⁸ Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin have accused the group's founder, Abdelhakim Sefrioui of having "launched a fatwa" against the teacher. Sefrioui was known to French security services for his Islamist and radical anti-

¹⁵⁸ Government spokesperson Gabriel Attal Press conference: <https://bit.ly/38aMrHc>.

Zionist activism and antisemitic speeches. The Council of Ministers also dissolved BarakaCity¹⁵⁹ and CCIF (collectif against Islamophobia),¹⁶⁰ two associations accused of spreading Islamist propaganda and antisemitism behind the mask of anti-racism and humanitarian activities. "For too long, cultural associations have been the Trojan horses of radical Islamist," stated government spokesperson Gabriel Attal.¹⁶¹

France Unveils Draft Law to Fight Islamist Radicalism

On October 28th, President Macron outlined new measures¹⁶² aimed at countering what he called "Islamist separatism" and defending the French secular model of *laïcité*. The move received broad support from the French Jewish community. "French Jews, who are high on the list of targets for radical Islamists, have much to gain and little to fear from the plan because their education system conforms—and for the most part belongs—to the public school system," said Delphine Horvilleur, a Reform rabbi at Paris' MJLF Beaugrenelle congregation.¹⁶³ In a symbolic move, the government finally sent a draft bill¹⁶⁴ to parliament on December 9th which marks the 115th anniversary of the 1905 law on the separation of church and state, a pillar of the French Republic. The proposed legislation includes placing sharp limits on home-schooling of children over three years old and increasing scrutiny of religious schools and associations. Additionally, the draft bill contains provisions aimed at combating hate speech and illegal content online. It creates a new offense for endangering others by disseminating information, including online, about people's private or professional life with the intention of harming the person or their family (Art. 18). Most notable is the proposal to create a procedure for the *immediate appearance*¹⁶⁵ of individuals who disseminate online *hate* speech before a criminal court (Art. 20).

Combating Antisemitism: Other Events

French Constitutional Council Declares Hate Speech Law Unconstitutional,¹⁶⁶ June 2020

The French Constitutional Council, the highest constitutional authority in France, blocked a large portion of the "Avia Law," which was adopted by the National Assembly on May 13, 2020. The Avia bill required social media platforms and search engines to remove "manifestly illegal content" within 24 hours of it being reported or risk fines of up to €1.25 million. The Constitutional Council noted in its ruling that the measure put the onus for analyzing content solely on tech platforms without the involvement of a judge, within a very short time frame, and with the threat of heavy penalties. According to the court, this created an incentive for risk-averse platforms to

¹⁵⁹ Gérald Darmanin official Twitter account: <https://bit.ly/38aMrHc>.

¹⁶⁰ Gérald Darmanin official Twitter account: <https://bit.ly/37qHk6v>.

¹⁶¹ Government spokesperson Gabriel Attal Press conference: <https://bit.ly/38aMrHc>.

¹⁶² <http://nyti.ms/2KrKtEO>.

¹⁶³ <http://bit.ly/2KfIXLr>.

¹⁶⁴ Draft bill bolstering the respect of the principles of the Republic, National Assembly website, December 9, 2020 http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/textes/l15b3649_projet-loi.

¹⁶⁵ « Procédure de comparution immédiate » in French

¹⁶⁶ <http://bit.ly/38fxzXU>.

indiscriminately remove flagged content. The law's provisions "therefore infringe upon the exercise of freedom of expression and communication in a way that is not necessary, suitable, and proportionate," the court said. However, the draft bill "bolstering the respect of the principles of the Republic" introduced to National Assembly in December 2020 has recycled some of the Avia bill provisions (see paragraph above).

[Mireille Knoll: French Judges Order Trial Over Antisemitic Murder,¹⁶⁷ July 2020](#)

Two men accused of killing 85-year-old Mireille Knoll in her Paris home in 2018 will stand trial on a charge of murder aggravated by antisemitism, the Paris prosecutor's office announced. Yacine Mihoub and his associate Alex Carrimbacus are alleged to have brutally murdered 85-year-old Mireille Knoll, a survivor of the mass deportation of the Jews of Paris in July 1942.

[Suspect Charged in 1982 Terror Attack on Paris Jewish Restaurant,¹⁶⁸ December 2020](#)

A suspect in a 1982 terror attack in Paris's historical Jewish neighborhood was charged and remanded in custody by French authorities after his extradition from Norway. Walid Abdulrahman Abu Zayed is suspected to be linked to an antisemitic attack that left six people dead when a group of men threw a grenade into the Jo Goldenberg restaurant and opened fire. The attack was blamed on the Abu Nidal Organization, a splinter group of the Palestinian Fatah group. France had issued international arrest warrants for two other suspects in Jordan and another in Ramallah. A secret deal between French intelligence services and Abu Nidal was revealed in 2019 under which the latter's members would not be arrested if they refrained from committing further attacks on French soil.¹⁶⁹

[Charlie Hebdo & Hyper Cacher: 14 Guilty in 2015 Terror Attacks Trial,¹⁷⁰ December 2020](#)

On September 2, 2020, the trial of 14 suspects accused of involvement in the January 2015 attacks on Charlie Hebdo, police officers, and the kosher supermarket Hyper Cacher—which left 17 people dead—began. Following a 3.5 month-trial, all 14 accomplices were found guilty on various charges, ranging from belonging to a criminal network to direct complicity in the terror attacks. Three defendants were tried in absentia while the three attackers, brothers Said and Cherif Kouachi and Amedy Coulibaly, were shot dead by police at the terror scene. Hayat Boumeddiene, who fled to Syria a week before the attacks, was handed a 30-year jail sentence. The main defendant in court, Ali Riza Polat, was also given a 30-year jail term. Terrorism charges were dropped for six of the 11 defendants.

[Prison Sentences and Arrests for Holocaust Deniers and Prominent Antisemitic Figures](#)

July – French police arrested popular far-right influencer Alain Soral,¹⁷¹ one of the country's most prominent purveyors of antisemitic sentiment. Soral was apprehended at his Paris apartment in

¹⁶⁷ <http://bit.ly/2KyFkiL>.

¹⁶⁸ <http://bit.ly/2LBs2mU>.

¹⁶⁹ <http://bit.ly/3gUNfnk>.

¹⁷⁰ <http://bbc.in/3aiyl3H>.

¹⁷¹ <http://bit.ly/3hkUUvL>.

connection with his website, “Equality and Reconciliation,” over incitement to hatred against Jews and actions that “endanger the fundamental interests of the Republic.” However, a judge released Soral a day later.

September – A court jailed a well-known Holocaust denier Hervé Lalin (Hervé Ryssen) for a series of antisemitic posts on Facebook and Twitter, as well as for a video he published on YouTube in 2018, called “The Jews, Incest, and Hysteria.”¹⁷²

November – Holocaust denier Vincent Reynouard was once again sentenced (in absentia) to four months in prison for questioning a crime against humanity after a video published on YouTube in May 2017 in which he denied the existence of the Holocaust.¹⁷³

4. Holocaust Education and Remembrance: A Key Strategy for Countering Antisemitism

France has a strong legal arsenal to counter racism, antisemitism, and Holocaust denial. In 1990, France passed the *Gayssot Act*, one of the world’s harshest law criminalizing Holocaust denial. Beyond penalties and security measures, Holocaust education and remembrance serves as an essential instrument for addressing and countering antisemitism, with schools playing a central role in it. However, assessing the effectiveness of complex policies—such as anti-racist policies—faces methodological limitations and challenges. While inputs such as budgets allocated to education, combating racism, and security are measurable, evaluating the effectiveness of these policies requires a more complex approach.

That being said, several elements indicate that France’s commitment to the ‘duty of remembrance’ of the Holocaust (‘Devoir de mémoire’) have been shown to produce encouraging results. As an example, an authoritative survey¹⁷⁴ conducted by the French Institute of Public Opinion (IFOP) published in September 2020, shows that some 87% of French people aged 15-24 had already heard about the Holocaust, 95% of them had heard about the gas chambers, and 80% of them learned about this at school. “We can congratulate ourselves on the progress made in society thanks to schools educating young people about the Shoah,” the Union of French Jewish students (UEJF) said in a statement.

However, this encouraging data should be interpreted cautiously as the study also reveals a more complex reality. Indeed, one in ten students surveyed said it was impossible to teach the Holocaust in their class, 34% of young people say they have noted “jokes” about the subject, while 21% witnessed the many criticisms and questions from other students during lessons about the subject. Obstacles to teaching about the Holocaust in French public schools have been repeatedly exposed over the last 20 years. French historian Georges Bensoussan warned that “Antisemitism in French

¹⁷² <http://bit.ly/3h9wEwv>.

¹⁷³ <http://bit.ly/2KJ10tB>.

¹⁷⁴ <http://bit.ly/3cAnFns>

schools and universities has reached a worrying level. Its more spectacular manifestations are an increasing physical and verbal violence against Jewish pupils, as well as an unbearable pressure exerted upon teachers who try to lecture about the Shoah and the Second World War.”¹⁷⁵

5. Holocaust Trivialization & Competitive Victimhood

In a speech at the UN in January 2015, French philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy claimed that “Anti-Zionism, Holocaust Denial, and Competitive Victimhood,” compose the new trypic of modern antisemitism. Recent events surrounding *Charlie Hebdo*’s republication of the prophet Muhammed cartoons have illustrated once again the pertinence of this thesis. Indeed, President Macron’s firm defense of free speech and the right to mock religion have stirred the ire of Muslims across the world who consider depictions of Muhammed blasphemous. In this context, many invoke the Holocaust and the question of antisemitism, shedding light on the rising phenomenon of Holocaust trivialization and competitive victimhood.

On one hand, some controversial Muslim figures abuse an adversarial competitive victimhood narrative, arguing that the French state’s enforcement of harsh legislative framework criminalizing antisemitism and Holocaust denial, while simultaneously allowing and defending the right to mock Islam’s Prophet, constitutes more evidence of “Jewish privilege” and of a Jewish monopoly over the “victim status.” The incitement to racial hatred (racism and antisemitism)—which constitutes a criminal offence in French law—is perceived as the equivalent to blasphemy (offending religions); an offense definitively abolished by the French Republic in 1881.

On the other hand, a narrative equating the situation of Muslims in today’s Europe, and in France in particular, with that of Jews before or during the Holocaust, has become an established recurring discourse and has reached beyond the French border. By way of example, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei appears to liken Holocaust denial to the publication of Muhammed cartoons. Khamenei took to Twitter to ask, “Why is it a crime to raise doubts about the Holocaust? Why should anyone who writes about such doubts be imprisoned while insulting the Prophet (pbuh) is allowed?”¹⁷⁶ Iran also announced it will host its third Holocaust denial cartoon contest¹⁷⁷ in response to Macron’s defense of *Charlie Hebdo*’s decision to republish Muhammad caricatures. Similarly, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also invoked the Holocaust¹⁷⁸ in condemning President Macron’s crackdown on radical Islam while a Pakistani minister compared Macron’s policies towards radical Islam to the Nazis’ treatment of the Jews during the Holocaust.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ <https://sicsa.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/sicsa/files/bensoussan.pdf>

¹⁷⁶ <https://bit.ly/2KbKan7>.

¹⁷⁷ <http://bit.ly/3arfn06>.

¹⁷⁸ <http://bit.ly/3apLrSp>.

¹⁷⁹ <http://bit.ly/37nZ2HL>.

6. Main Antisemitic Incidents in 2020

PARIS, June 2020 – Some French anti-racism protesters were heard shouting "dirty Jews" while others were seen holding up placards reading "Israel, laboratory of police violence" and waving Palestinian flags at a rally in Paris's Place de la République.¹⁸⁰ Some groups on the far-left have used the Black Lives Matter movement to demonize and delegitimize Israel.

PARIS, July 2020 – Jean-Luc Mélenchon, president of the far-left political party "La France Insoumise," has been accused of recycling the age-old antisemitic decide trope during a TV interview. "Listen, I don't know if Jesus was on the cross. I know who put him there, it seems that it was his own compatriots," he claimed.¹⁸¹

PARIS, August 2020 – David S., 29-year-old, said he was violently attacked by two men of African descent in Paris. The two attackers hurled antisemitic insults at him then proceeded to beat him unconscious with their fists before stealing his watch.¹⁸²

STRASBOURG, August 2020 – A young Jewish graffiti artist wearing an 'Israel' t-shirt was assaulted in Strasbourg.¹⁸³

ONLINE, December 2020 – Miss France 2021 Runner-Up April Benayoum was targeted by a torrent of antisemitic messages on Twitter after she mentioned her father's Israeli origins in an interview at the event. The hateful tweets drew widespread condemnation from prominent politicians and public figures and the case was sent to the public prosecutor.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ <http://bit.ly/2IWFMrz>.

¹⁸¹ <http://bit.ly/3aiBQfP>.

¹⁸² <http://bit.ly/2LDDqi5>.

¹⁸³ <http://bit.ly/3aigxuL>.

¹⁸⁴ <http://bit.ly/3p7l3zu>.

GERMANY

1. General Trends

In 2021, Germany will be celebrating 1,700 years of Jewish life in its territory,¹⁸⁵ but is still struggling with antisemitism. Although Germany is attempting to combat it through various means, such as appointing 27 Antisemitism Commissioners¹⁸⁶, supporting projects against antisemitism, adopting laws and regulations, and providing lessons on the Holocaust in schools and police academies, the number of antisemitic incidents continues to rise.

In 2019, German police recorded 2,032 antisemitic incidents¹⁸⁷, the highest number nationwide since 2001 and a rise of 13% compared to the previous year. An analysis of the data published by the German Interior Ministry in 2019 and 2020 shows a consecutive increase in the number of antisemitic incidents over the last two years, and it's likely that incidents in 2020 will surpass the number of 2019. In the first three quarters of 2020 there were 1,393 incidents, including 35 violent attacks¹⁸⁸, compared to 1,155 incidents and 41 violent attacks in the same period in 2019¹⁸⁹. It's important to emphasize that these numbers represent only the events reported to the police, and it's presumed that the number of incidents is actually much greater. This hypothesis is based on the differences between the official data and the numbers published by non-governmental organizations. For example, the Berlin Research and Information Center on Antisemitism (Recherche- und Informationsstelle Antisemitismus, RIAS) reported 410 antisemitic incidents in Berlin in the first 6 months of 2020¹⁹⁰, while police listed only 130 such incidents during that same period.¹⁹¹ This is likely due to the fact that those affected often shied away from the bureaucracy associated with reports, fear not being taken seriously, or don't bother complaining or reporting an antisemitic incident to the police due to a lack of confidence in law enforcement. The number of antisemitic offenses are rising but almost all perpetrators remain unpunished. In the first three quarters of 2020, a total of 819 suspects who committed antisemitic crimes were identified by the police¹⁹², but only four of them were temporarily arrested. In 2019, a total of 639 suspects¹⁹³ were identified but only five were temporarily arrested. Berlin law enforcement authorities initiated 386

¹⁸⁵ The first documentary evidence of settlement of Jewish communities north of the Alps comes from the year 321. In an edict, Emperor Constantine allowed the magistrate of Cologne to accept Jewish members.

¹⁸⁶ Germany has: 1 Federal Antisemitism Commissioner, 13 State Antisemitism Commissioners, 6 Antisemitism Commissioners at the General Public Prosecutor's offices, 1 Antisemitism Commissioner at the Police, 2 Antisemitism Commissioners of the Jewish Communities, 1 Antisemitism Commissioner of the Protestant Church in Germany, and 3 other Antisemitism Commissioners. Only four of them are Jews.

¹⁸⁷ <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/194/1919457.pdf>.

¹⁸⁸ <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/242/1924218.pdf>.

¹⁸⁹ <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/153/1915393.pdf>.

¹⁹⁰ <https://bit.ly/2MuWu2A>.

¹⁹¹ <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/214/1921411.pdf>.

<https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/194/1919457.pdf>.

¹⁹² In the first half of 2020, 876 antisemitic offenses were reported by the police, including 21 acts of violence and 148 propaganda offenses.

¹⁹³ In 2019, a total of 1,155 antisemitic incidents, incl. 41 acts of violence were reported by the police.

proceedings with an antisemitic background but only 27 proceedings were finalized and a total of 17 fines were imposed.¹⁹⁴

Police sometimes don't even interfere in antisemitic incidents and instead stand nearby watching. In most cases, they don't react because they don't recognize an antisemitic incident or don't understand that expressing antisemitic statements is a problem, and thus don't see any reason to interfere. This lack of awareness also leads to the fact that most complaints by victims of antisemitic crimes are not being processed by the police. In addition to this, the police continue to assign antisemitic incidents to the 'Right' when no further specifications are identifiable and the suspects are unknown. The Bundestag reports, which are based on the data reported by the Police, attribute the overwhelming majority of events (94%¹⁹⁵) to rightwing motives. Like in previous years, this number is being contested by organizations monitoring antisemitism, politicians, Jewish leaders and experts, as well as the Federal Commissioner for Antisemitism, who argue that the police's system of categorizing incidents leads to a distorted picture concerning the motive and the perpetrators' circle, and thus hampers effective policy making.

2. The Extremist Scenes in Germany

On the anniversary of the Yom Kippur attack on the Halle synagogue, the head of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), Thomas Haldenwang, warned of increasing hostility and violence against Jews. He called on society and security authorities to be vigilant and claimed that the danger mostly comes from radicalized individuals with "dreary life circumstances" who look to blame minorities for their situation.¹⁹⁶ The 2019 BfV report stated that hostility towards Jews is generally widespread in all extremist scenes, including the extreme Left, though to a lesser degree. The major threat to Jews stems from right-wing extremists and radical Muslims.

2.1 The Radical Muslim Scene

According to the BfV report for 2019,¹⁹⁷ the Islamist scene grew to 28,020 persons (2018: 26,560). The number of Salafists rose to 12,150 (2018: 11,300), and thus more than tripled since the first census of Salafists in 2011. A Bundestag report showed that at the end of the third quarter of 2020, the police and Intelligence Service classified 619 people as "Islamist threats" and 513 as persons belonging to the Islamist-terrorist scene. Out of the 1,132 potential terrorists, 275 are asylum seekers.¹⁹⁸ The BfV stated that the threat posed by Islamist terrorism remained high and antisemitism represents an ideological staple in all Islamist circles. These ideas represent a considerable challenge for peaceful and tolerant coexistence in Germany. "The number of physical attacks against Jewish people is currently still low. However, even these individual cases make it

¹⁹⁴ <https://bit.ly/2Wb1E5s>.

¹⁹⁵ https://www.petrapau.de/19_bundestag/dok/down/2020_zf_antisemitische_Straftaten.pdf.

¹⁹⁶ <https://bit.ly/3oRPD0T>.

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/embed/vsbericht-2019.pdf>.

¹⁹⁸ <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/240/1924082.pdf>.

clear that the ideological radicalization of people and incitement to hatred and violence through antisemitic ideas can lead to violent antisemitic riots, even if the perpetrators are neither members nor supporters of an Islamist organization. This applies not least to people who have been socialized in the Arab world in social milieux in which antisemitic attitudes are widespread.”¹⁹⁹

Threat also stems from so-called legalistic Islamist groups, non-violent, but inherently anti-Jewish, groups which pursue their extremist goals with political means within the existing legal system. According to a report published by the American Jewish Committee (AJC)²⁰⁰, they have “an anti-democratic agenda, propagate a decidedly antisemitic ideology, and are in the service of the Iranian regime. They are little known in the German public, but at the federal and state level they are partners of the state, churches, and universities.” The Islamic Center of Hamburg (IZH) is paradigmatic for the problem of legalistic Islamism. It’s the central actor of Shiite Islamism in Germany and the EU for supporters of the Iranian regime in Europe. According to the BfV, it’s the most important representation of Iran in Europe. The head of the IZH is directly appointed by the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei. According to the security authorities, it’s also the center for Hezbollah supporters in Hamburg. Moreover, there is also a strong influence of radical Islam in schools. The German Teachers Association warned against a “climate of intimidation” towards teachers, claiming “there are more and more attempts to influence and hinder teachers in their task of conveying values and democracy.” As a result, teachers are afraid of dealing with topics such as the Holocaust, Israel, or referring to Mohammed cartoons in lessons on freedom of expression and artistic freedom.²⁰¹

2.2 The Extreme Right

According to the BfV report for 2019, the extreme right-wing scene grew to 32,080 persons in 2019, a rise of 33% compared to 2018 and of 221% compared to 2016. Out of them, 13,000 were classified as violent (2018:12,700). The number of crimes perpetrated by right-wing extremists increased by 9% to 22,342 in the past year. While they committed 15.3% less acts of violence in general in 2019 (2019: 695; 2018: 821), their number of antisemitic acts of violence rose from 48 to 56, and their number of crimes with an antisemitic background rose by 17.1% to a total of 1,844 crimes (2018: 1,575). This trend of rising violence and radicalization continued also in 2020. In the first three quarters of 2020, the police reported 15,007 crimes, among them 671 acts of violence, committed by neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists. The numbers represent an increase by 874 crimes and 46 acts of violence compared to the same time last year.²⁰² As in previous years, these extremists train in martial arts, survival techniques, and physical exercise. Groups and individuals are training abroad in the use of weapons, and there are also attempts to obtain legal weapons.

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/embed/vsbericht-2019.pdf>.

²⁰⁰ https://ajcgermany.org/system/files/document/AJC-Berlin_IZH-Broschuere_43S_A5%281%29.pdf.

²⁰¹ <https://bit.ly/3mdyFsf>.

²⁰² <https://bit.ly/37hzQ5E>.

In addition, the extreme right-wing scene is increasingly seeking to influence the mainstream. They do so by spreading propaganda on social media and at events. Recently, the Saxon Intelligence Service warned that right-wing extremists are purchasing properties in rural areas in order to lead their ideological campaigns and increase community outreach. Currently, 146 properties are either owned or rented by right-wing extremists and used to host concerts and “testimonials” by Holocaust revisionists, sell neo-Nazi merchandise, and run restaurants whose proceeds are used to fund their movements and possibly launder money. They also plan to establish martial arts centers to train young men who reject the state and society to be active fighters.²⁰³

Right-Wing Extremism in the AfD

Some 7,000 of the 32,080 right-wing extremists are former followers of the nationalistic and völkisch AfD group *Der Flügel*, which dissolved itself in April 2020 after being declared a “proven extremist endeavor” and placed under surveillance by the BfV a month earlier. This dissolution, however, is seen by experts as a farce since the group’s leadership and members remained within the AfD. Thus, the main protagonists and the ideology of the group continue to exist within the AfD and are represented in the AfD executive committees in various states. In March and June, respectively, the Thuringia AfD and the Brandenburg AfD were placed under surveillance by the BfV due to their “endeavors against the liberal democratic basic order.” The BfV stated that they had a “biological-racist” world view, manifested extremist positions, and links in right-wing extremist groups.²⁰⁴ Monitoring the AfD is one step away from banning the party.

Antisemitism in the Police

According to the BfV situation report published on October 6th, there were a total of 380 ongoing or completed disciplinary proceedings against right-wing extremist employees in the German police from January 2017 to March 2020. Every seventh case occurred in Hessen, which is ahead of NRW, Bavaria, and Lower Saxony. However, this report is missing several antisemitic cases, such as the “NSU 2.0”- affair, during which some 70 threatening letters were sent by “NSU 2.0”²⁰⁵ and addressed to 27 people and institutions in eight federal states, among them Josef Schuster, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. In several cases, the victims’ data was accessed via Hessian police computers, so it’s speculated that police officers partook in the affair. Moreover, in December, NRW Interior Minister Herbert Reul announced that more than 200 employees of NRW security authorities, almost all of them police officers, are being investigated for right-wing extremism.²⁰⁶ Investigators have secured substantial evidence indicating the glorification of Nazism and the excessive use of Nazi customs and imagery. The evidence procured includes images of uniformed police officers performing the Nazi salute and singing traditional Nazi songs. Thus, the number of antisemitic and racist scandals within the police is clearly higher than stated in the BfV

²⁰³ <https://bit.ly/385VJnY>.

²⁰⁴ <https://bit.ly/3n4VpuN>.

²⁰⁵ NSU - *Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund* was a German neo-Nazi terrorist group which had committed a series of murders and bombings. It was uncovered in November 2011.

²⁰⁶ <https://bit.ly/2K4K68F>.

report. In general, the police scandals included offenses of Holocaust glorification and trivialization, sedition, the “use of symbols of unconstitutional organizations” (§86a of the Criminal Code), the spreading of antisemitic conspiracy theories, and the destroying of evidence related to antisemitic crimes.

Extremist Members of Security Forces are Preparing for “Day X”

German authorities have evidence that there are more than 1,000 violent right-wing extremists across Germany and nearby countries who are immediately ready for an armed struggle that will lead to the murder of political opponents and the collapse of the state order on “Day X.”²⁰⁷ The police seized large caches of weapons, ammunition, chemicals, and plans to commit terror attacks. According to the president of the BfV, “the preparations for “Day X” are more concrete than expected.” Among these extremists, there are policemen and soldiers, who use their position to retrieve secret information from police computers, accumulate weapons and train in combat. Right-wing forces in the police and Bundeswehr are making plans to overthrow the government, setting up weapons stores and keeping lists of opponents to be killed when time comes.²⁰⁸ It should be noted that some of the potential terrorists are teenagers. In November, charges were filed against a 14-year-old for planning an attack and inciting murder against Muslims and Jews in NRW. He asked people via WhatsApp to kill people of Jewish or Muslim faith with a gun or a knife in a synagogue or mosque, and procured various chemical substances in order to manufacture explosives with which he himself wanted to kill Jews and Muslims.²⁰⁹

3. Rise in Antisemitism During and Due to Covid-19

3.1 Emergence of New Conspiracy Theories

The outbreak of the Coronavirus immediately triggered a series of antisemitic conspiracy theories. Jews and Zionists were blamed for deliberately causing the pandemic and inventing the virus with the intention of profiting from the sale of vaccines and the upcoming financial crash. Right-wing extremists associate the coronavirus with the antisemitic discourse of a “New World Order” (NWO) and insinuate that the pandemic will be used to establish the long-planned NWO worldwide, and Jewish bankers are defamed as its initiators. George Soros, who is always associated with his Judaism in Germany, is accused for profiting from the virus and for taking advantage of the situation to distract from “his plan” to have Austria, Germany, and Europe invaded by Muslim refugees.

The “QAnon” conspiracy theory, which didn’t have much of a following in Germany before the outbreak of the pandemic, has spread significantly. Following the USA and other English-speaking countries, Germany is now the largest market for the “QAnon” conspiracy ideology while prominent

²⁰⁷ <https://www1.wdr.de/nachrichten/westfalen-lippe/mutmassliches-terrornetzwerk-minden-100.html>.

²⁰⁸ For example, *Groupe Nordkreuz* and *Groupe Werner S.*

²⁰⁹ <https://bit.ly/37c6aae>.

German artists and athletes use their social media presence to spread related conspiracies.²¹⁰ According to a report by the World Jewish Congress (WJC), “the core of the myth asserts that an anonymous individual, ‘Q’, with a high-level U.S. intelligence security clearance, is leaking information about Trump’s secret war [against] a cabal run by criminal politicians and the Hollywood elite [collectively known as the ‘Deep State’] funded by George Soros and the Rothschild family.”²¹¹ According to QAnon, the ultimate goal of the ‘Deep State’ is to rule the masses. In Germany, musician Xavier Naidoo attracted attention to the modern form of the blood libel conspiracy, which claims that Jews kidnap, torture, and kill children to use their blood in order to produce adrenochrome for an alleged anti-aging product. Like other QAnon adherents worldwide, Germany’s extreme right views US President Donald Trump as a kind of cult figure and savior. In addition, supporters use classic accusations of hostility towards Jews when they portray Jews as servants of Satan.

3.2 Holocaust Trivialization

The Coronavirus crisis sparked a rise in Holocaust trivialization in Germany. Before the pandemic, Holocaust trivialization was propagated mostly by individuals, however this phenomenon has shifted and it’s now clearly widespread. It has become popular for Germans protesting Coronavirus restrictions to compare them to the antisemitic policies of the Nazi regime, and themselves to the Jews during the Holocaust. This thus abuses the memory of Holocaust victims and trivializes Nazi atrocities. For example, “Corona Deniers” and conspiracy theorists compare the mask-wearing mandates to the Yellow Star that Jews were forced to wear under the Nazi regime. They speak of a “Corona economic Holocaust” and warn of a “new Holocaust” against anti-vaxxers. The infamous phrase “Arbeit Macht Frei” has been repurposed to say “Impfen Macht Frei,” which means “Vaccination Sets You Free.” Additionally, badges and shirts featuring the Yellow Star with the inscription “unvaccinated” have become popular,²¹² while clothes and accessories expressing Holocaust trivialization are sold online and worn in public (see image to the right). Holocaust deniers regularly attend and speak at rallies against Coronavirus restrictions.



Two speeches held in November at different rallies caused particular outrage and the videos of them went viral. In one speech, an 11-year-old girl compared herself to Anne Frank since she and her friends had to be quiet during her birthday party so as not to be “tipped off by [their] neighbors.” In the second speech, a woman compared herself to resistance fighter Sophie Scholl, who was

²¹⁰ <https://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/01-debate-report-QAnon.pdf>.

²¹¹ <https://www.wzo.org.il/antisemitism/index.php?dir=site&page=articles&op=item&cs=6610>.

²¹² In late May, Munich banned the Yellow Star at rallies protesting Corona restrictions and introduced a fine for people wearing the Yellow Star (e.g. with the inscription “unvaccinated”).

sentenced to death by the Gestapo, because she was “active in the resistance for months.” At a rally in December, a speaker called for a silent march in Auschwitz on the anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp on January 27th to protest the persecution of those who oppose the Covid-19 restrictions.

Moving Holocaust Trivialization from Social Media to Protests and Rallies

Since March, antisemitism connected to the Coronavirus has been on the rise on social media, and in May it began appearing in public. Weekly rallies have since taken place all over Germany; some attended by tens of thousands of people. For example, on August 29th, approximately 38,000 protesters gathered throughout Berlin; among them were known neo-Nazis, extreme right-wing conspiracy theorists, ‘Reich citizens,’ members of the AfD, and neo-Nazi parties. Protesters held signs and wore shirts featuring Holocaust trivialization, antisemitic conspiracy theories, and neo-Nazi slogans. During the rally in front of the Reichstag, several hundred protesters broke the building’s barriers and stormed up the stairs to the entrance. Some were waving “Reich flags,” which are particularly popular in the neo-Nazi scene.

An analysis of social media and pictures from the so-called “Hygiene Rallies,” or “Corona Demos,” showed that images and theories featuring Holocaust trivialization that originated on social media were then adopted by protesters at real world protests. For example, the slogan “Impfen Macht Frei” appeared on social media in April, and, thereafter, protesters were seen holding signs with the same slogan in May (see images below).



Jews clearly felt the consequence of the spreading of antisemitic conspiracy theories and Holocaust trivialization online and offline. According to RIAS Berlin, almost one out of six reported antisemitic incidents in the first half of 2020 was directly related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Extreme-Right Rhetoric Seeping into the Mainstream

What has become worrisome is that the “Corona Demos” have come to attract a wide range of people. These include people who practice esotericism, naturopaths, anti-vaxxers, antisemites who believe in a “Jewish world conspiracy,” right-wing extremists, neo-Nazis, AfD politicians, QAnon followers, ‘Reich citizens’ who deny the existence and sovereignty of the Federal Republic, as well

those who reject the free press, scientific knowledge, the Federal Government, or Chancellor Merkel.²¹³ As a result of increased intermingling among these various groups both online and offline, antisemitic conspiracy theories have spread quickly since the outbreak of the virus and moved from extreme right-wing circles to rhetoric amongst the mainstream. Many Germans, including known cultural figures, were radicalized during the Corona crisis and have become important propagators of conspiracy theories surrounding the virus and efforts to contain it. An example is Atilla Hildmann, a well-known author of vegan cookbooks, who started spreading them on his Telegram account and then began organizing rallies where he held speeches openly threatening prominent persons, praising Hitler, and inciting hatred against Jews. He repeatedly talked of an orchestrated genocide through Covid-19 vaccinations planned by a "Zionist regime under Merkel and Bill Gates."

4. Perception of the Holocaust

75 years after its end, the Holocaust is still a controversial issue in Germany. On one side, efforts are being made to safeguard the memory, support Holocaust survivors, and bring the last living perpetrators to court. On the other side, Holocaust memorials and Stolpersteine²¹⁴ are regularly defaced and swastikas are etched into headstones at cemeteries, painted on Holocaust memorials, and in public places all over Germany. Right-wing extremists constantly spread Holocaust denial and trivialization, and target former concentration camps, write Nazi glorifying messages in visitor books, disrupt guided tours by mingling among groups of visitors while loudly questioning the number of victims or denying the Holocaust. Additionally, the Left instigates a public debate regarding the uniqueness of the Holocaust.

4.1 Efforts at Safeguarding the Memory and Supporting Holocaust Survivors

The state, cities, and private citizens stepped up efforts to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive. A new memorial site honoring Jews deported to concentration camps by the Nazis during the Holocaust was unveiled in June by the Bavarian city of Würzburg. Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas announced during his visit to Poland in June that Germany will double its financial support for the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation to a total of 120 million euros; and the WeKickCorona Initiative, which was established by two professional soccer players, donated approximately \$80,000 to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

At the same time, the German public prosecutor's office was investigating 16 former concentration camp guards and six perpetrators of Nazi crimes committed outside concentration camps in an effort to bring the last surviving perpetrators to court. Moreover, judges were setting important precedents for future Nazi crime trials, such as the decision that killing can't be limited to direct killing only, but must also include "killing through work." Forced labor is now categorized as a type

²¹³ <https://bit.ly/345dYs7>.

²¹⁴ "Stumbling stones" – brass street tiles that were placed at the former homes of Holocaust victims to commemorate them, are regularly spray painted, damaged, or cemented over on a daily basis.

of murder, and the distinction between extermination camps and labor camps has finally become irrelevant.

4.2 Prevalence of Holocaust Denial and Trivialization

However, when it came to court cases connected to Holocaust trivialization, judges often took rather lenient or counterproductive stances. Neo-Nazis were only given suspended prison sentences for sedition, Holocaust trivialization, and defaming, and insulting Jews.²¹⁵ Politicians posting Holocaust trivializing content on social media were acquitted.²¹⁶ Courts and city administrations repeatedly allowed events which openly trivialize the Holocaust and rallies with neo-Nazi symbolic²¹⁷ to take place.

Moreover, an increasing number of Germans are “fed up” with dealing with the Holocaust. In a survey conducted for the Deutsche Welle news agency on January 27th, 37% of the respondents agreed with the statement “Some say that the Germans should no longer deal so much with the Nazi era,” and voted “for drawing an end line.” In 2018, their share was only 26% and in 2019 it was 33%. The shares are especially high among AfD voters (72%) and among respondents who only graduated from secondary or elementary school (56%).²¹⁸

The outcome of the survey concerning AfD voters doesn’t come as surprise, since AfD functionaries have repeatedly called for an end of the German dealing with the Nazi-past in previous years. Parliamentary Leader Alexander Gauland called the Nazi-era “only a bird shit in the 1000 years of successful German history” and Thuringia AfD chairman Björn Höcke called for a “180 degree” shift in the way Germans are taught history. In 2020, AfD functionaries kept up this narrative of Holocaust trivialization. For example, at an event of the AfD group *Der Flügel* on March 10th, Höcke demanded that critics within the party be “ausgeschwitzt” (“sweated out”). It should be noted that “AUSgeSCHWITZt werden” (“To be sweated out”) is not a word or an idiom that ever existed in the German language. The play on words regarding the Auschwitz concentration camp was created by Höcke.²¹⁹ In May, Gauland argued that the day World War II ended should not be commemorated as a public holiday, because its legacy was too “ambivalent (...) it was a day of liberation for the concentration camp inmates. But it was also a day of absolute defeat.”²²⁰ His words are reminiscent of the rhetoric of neo-Nazis, right-wing extremists, and Holocaust deniers, and can be understood as a clear message to them. Around May 8th, there was a surge on social media of posts calling it a day of defeat and mourning. Moreover, the AfD also expressed Holocaust trivialization visually by

²¹⁵ For an example, see <https://dubisthalle.de/11-monate-bewaehrung-fuer-sven-liebich>.

²¹⁶ For an example, see <https://bit.ly/3ngDS3Y>.

²¹⁷ The city administration of Brandenburg permitted a rally with the motto “repeating history together,” and set to start at 18:18 (the neo-Nazi code for Adolf Hitler) to take place on November 9th.

²¹⁸ <https://www.dw.com/de/die-deutschen-wollen-keinen-schlussstrich/a-52094901>.

²¹⁹ <https://www.mdr.de/thueringen/hoecke-kritik-fluegel-nrw-100.html>.

²²⁰ <https://bit.ly/34ca4hs>.

selling stickers featuring the question “time again?” and a Star of David with the inscription “AfD sympathizer” on the background of a striped shirt reminiscent of those worn by concentration camp inmates (see image to the right). The description of the product sold online at politaufkleber.de, which is owned by neo-Nazi Sven Liebich, makes a clear connection to the Holocaust.²²¹



While Holocaust trivialization has become common practice among the Right, the Left is attempting to erase the uniqueness of the Holocaust in public opinion. This spring has witnessed heated debate in Germany about the campaign to disinvite pro-BDS and antisemitic Cameroonian professor Achille Mbembe as the keynote speaker at the publicly-funded Ruhrtriennale festival; a popular German cultural event which was cancelled due to the pandemic. Mbembe’s writings include Holocaust trivialization, inversion, and New Antisemitism. He, inter alia, claimed that Holocaust victims are now repeating the Nazi crimes against the Palestinians, and compared the Holocaust to apartheid, contending that the only difference between them is scale. National and international, including Israeli, left-wing scholars have called for the resignation of Federal Antisemitism Commissioner Felix Klein over his opposition to Mbembe’s participation and triggered a surge of discussions online and offline on whether the BDS movement is antisemitic, and whether studying the Holocaust in a comparative context is legitimate or a downplaying of the Holocaust and antisemitism.

5. Influence of Antisemitism on the Jewish Community

Surveys show that Jews feel massively threatened by antisemitism. The Amadeu Antonio Foundation published surveys on antisemitism in Saxony, Baden-Württemberg, and Rhineland-Palatinate²²² which showed that many Jews no longer display religious symbols in public out of fear to be antisemitically assaulted. Hatred of Jews is an everyday phenomenon that can be found throughout German society. The inhibition threshold for verbal and physical violence against Jews is steadily decreasing. Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, antisemitic conspiracy theories were on the rise and spread from the extreme Right to the mainstream. This is alarming, since, as a survey by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation²²³ showed, already before the outbreak of the pandemic 30% of Germans believed that “there are secret powers that control the world,” and when asked who these “secret powers” are, many of them named Jews or Jewish families, such as George Soros and the Rothschilds, the Mossad, or the “finance capitalism,” (Finanzkapital) a common antisemitic code word for Jews. 56% of AfD supporters considered this conspiracy theory to be certain or probably correct.

²²¹ The description stated “the established ones are already talking openly about setting up camps for dissenters and dissidents, in which they can be brought back into line. It is not far from there to the stake. First books and opinions are being burned, then people.”

²²² <https://bit.ly/348pP8R>.

²²³ For the survey see <https://bit.ly/3mhDINP>.

The Halle terror attack from Yom Kippur 2019 left the Jewish community in fear. The trial of the extreme right-wing terrorist has shown the depth of the hatred against Jews among part of the society. Brandenburg's Minister of Culture Manja Schüle stated that antisemitism is “much more deeply rooted in society than we want to admit,” and it’s “the mother of all conspiracy theories.”²²⁴ Jews in Germany are once again wondering whether there is a future for them there. While they aren’t packing their suitcases yet, they’re making sure they’re prepared.

6. Efforts at Combatting Antisemitism

January: Federal Interior minister Horst Seehofer banned neo-Nazi group *Combat 18*.

March: Interior Minister banned ‘Reich citizen’ group “Geeinte deutsche Völker und Stämme.”

April: Interior Minister banned all Hezbollah activities.

June: The Bundestag passed laws to combat online antisemitism (see chapter on ACMS).

June: Interior Minister banned the militant neo-Nazi group *Nordadler*.

June: As a consequence of the Yom Kippur terror attack in Halle, the Saxony-Anhalt State Chancellery announced it would provide €890,000 in 2020 and €1,535,000 in 2021 to strengthen the protection of synagogues and Jewish community facilities.

July: The Federal Constitutional Court ruled that the slogan “cheeky-Jew-functionary,” which is used by right-wing extremists is a slogan rooted in Nazi propaganda and thus endangered public peace.

July: A new state-funded network of five advice centers, educational institutions, and nationwide research centers against antisemitism was created to combat antisemitism more effectively through cooperation and knowledge transfer.

August: Bavarian Antisemitism Commissioner Ludwig Spaenle and the head of the Bavarian state headquarters for political education, Rupert Gröbl, developed a thematic booklet on antisemitism to be distributed to all schools.

August: Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier takes over the patronage of the 2021 festival year celebrating 1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany. The festivities during that year are being organized by the association “321-2021: 1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany,” which was established especially for this purpose and aims at making Jewish life tangible and at taking a stand against increasing antisemitism.

August: The Hamburg district court forbids comparing abortions to the Holocaust.

September: The Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Central Council of Jews in Germany signed an agreement allocating €22 million for structural protective measures.

September: While only ‘black, white, and red’ flags which feature a swastika are banned throughout Germany, Bremen decided that all variants of the ‘black, white, and red’ flags represent a danger to public order. Flying the “Reich War Flag” is prohibited, and the “Reich Flag” must not be used as a publicly displayed provocation.

²²⁴ <https://bit.ly/2JYnBSE>.

October: The issue of antisemitism in security authorities has become a prominent issue in politics, media, and public. Interior ministers of several states have announced that they'll set up special commissions to investigate institutional antisemitism, racism, and xenophobia in the police.

October: Borussia Dortmund and the football section of Tennis Borussia Berlin adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. They are the first German football clubs to officially adopt the IHRA definition.

October: The Hessian state government adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.

November: Germany created a training program to increase the number of German-speaking Imams and teach them Western values. The program is in response to the large number of Imams sent to practice in Germany by various foreign government's religious authorities who spread hatred against Western values and non-Muslim German communities.

December: Interior Minister banned the militant neo-Nazi group *Wolfsbrigade 44*.

December: Bundestag allocates money for free entry to the Jewish Museum Berlin with the intent to strengthen the understanding of democracy and the historical judgment of young people in Germany in particular.

December: Stephan Balliet, the extreme right-wing terrorist who, last Yom Kippur, tried unsuccessfully to shoot his way into the Halle synagogue, and subsequently killed two non-Jewish people nearby, was sentenced to life in prison with subsequent preventive detention, the highest sentence possible. During his five-month trial, Balliet expressed no remorse for the attack and denied the Holocaust in open court.

7. Main Antisemitic Incidents in 2020

January: Deputy chairman of the German-Israeli Society, Helge David Gilberg, received several death threats following his speech memorializing the attack on the Halle synagogue, during which he warned of "intellectual arsonists" and held Thuringian AfD chairman Björn Höcke responsible for the growing antisemitism.

April: At least seven events, including Synagogue services, Torah lessons, commemoration events, and survivors' testimonies were Zoombombed by neo-Nazis on Yom Hashoah. They called for the death of Jews, drew swastikas, posted pornographic material, and shouted antisemitic obscenities.

June - Halle: Chairman of the Jewish community, Karl Sommer, received an antisemitic threatening letter with a bag containing white powder. That same week, in two separate incidents, swastikas were laid at the entrance to the community center of the Jewish community that was attacked last Yom Kippur.

July - Munich: Rabbi Shmuel Aharon Brodman, Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Munich and Upper Bavaria, was followed and antisemitically harassed by four Arabic speaking men after getting off a train.

August - Berlin: Neo-Nazis set fire to a pub owned by an Israeli Jew. It burned down almost completely. It was the fourth attack on the pub, which has been targeted with antisemitic graffiti multiple times and whose owner has received multiple threats over the years.

October - Hamburg: A 29-year-old German-Kazakh dressed in military garb and with a note with a swastika in his pocket attacked and seriously wounded a Jewish student with a foldable shovel in front of the Hohe Weide synagogue on Sukkot.

October - Berlin: The Mezuzah of the Tifferet Israel Synagogue was deliberately desecrated.

November - Essen: A resident of Iranian origin threw a large stone slab on a window of the Jewish community building and synagogue. The several kilograms heavy slab, hit the window pane and shattered it completely. A few days earlier, a concrete block was thrown at the building causing minor material damage.

UNITED KINGDOM

1. General Trends

According to the Community Security Trust (CST), an antisemitism monitoring watchdog group, there were 789 antisemitic incidents in the United Kingdom from January 2020-June 2020. This is a 13% decrease from the previous year when 911 incidents were recorded during the same time frame. Though the number of incidents fell, 2020 still had the third-highest number of antisemitic incidents ever recorded by CST in the January-June period of any year. The months with the lowest amount of antisemitic incidents during the first six months of 2020 were March and April. According to CST, “these months correlate with the period when coronavirus lockdown measures were most forcefully communicated and enforced.”²²⁵ In addition to this, CST recorded 1,805 antisemitic incidents in 2019, the highest ever annual total. 2019 was the fourth consecutive year in which CST recorded a new annual high, and was a 7% increase from 2018, which had 1,690 antisemitic incidents.²²⁶ Online antisemitism was the single largest contributor to the total number of antisemitic incidents in 2019. Reports of online antisemitism, particularly on social media, accounted for 697 incidents and comprised 39% of the annual total, indicating a 50% rise from the 466 online incidents reported in 2018.²²⁷ Furthermore, the annual trend of an increase in violent antisemitic assaults was also true for 2019, which saw the highest number of violent antisemitic assaults ever reported to CST. A total of 157 violent antisemitic assaults were recorded by CST in 2019; a 27% increase from the 124 assaults recorded in 2018.²²⁸

2. Labour Party Antisemitism & the EHRC Report

Following Jeremy Corbyn’s election as party leader in 2015, the Labour party has been engulfed in controversies surrounding accusations of institutionalized antisemitism. Over the next few years as party leader, Corbyn claimed those accusations were exaggerated for political purposes but was nonetheless committed to eliminating antisemitism within the party, though his actions never matched his rhetoric. In February 2019, the accusations culminated in nine MPs quitting Labour over the leadership’s handling of antisemitism. A series of large protests against Labour antisemitism took place throughout the country and widespread controversy over the topic led to a May 2019 announcement by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) that it will investigate allegations of antisemitism within Labour. Then in July, the UK’s top three Jewish newspapers published an unprecedented joint front-page statement warning of the “existential threat” a Corbyn-led government posed for the continuation of Jewish life the UK. A few months later, the party went on to lose the December 2019 general election. After Labour’s defeat, Corbyn resigned as party leader and Sir Keir Starmer was elected to succeed him in April 2020. Sir Keir

²²⁵ “Antisemitic Incidents: January-June 2020,” Community Security Trust, page 2, <https://bit.ly/3853ytZ>.

²²⁶ “2019 Annual Review,” Community Security Trust, page 14, <https://bit.ly/3nhtwAP>.

²²⁷ “Antisemitic Incidents: Report 2019,” Community Security Trust, page 4, <https://bit.ly/3pooeUM>.

²²⁸ Ibid., page 15.

promised to implement a ‘zero-tolerance’ policy towards antisemitism in Labour and reverse the damage caused to the Jewish community under Corbyn’s leadership. Over the last year, there have been numerous incidents of antisemitism within the party’s ranks, and a study published in September 2020 found that New Antisemitism among party supporters is currently on the rise while Classic Antisemitism peaked in 2018 under Corbyn’s leadership.²²⁹

In October 2020, the EHRC released their findings in a report which found the Labour party guilty of three breaches of the Equality Act. The report specified that under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour party was responsible for: political interference in antisemitism complaints, failure to provide adequate training to those handling antisemitism complaints and harassment, including the use of antisemitic tropes, and suggesting that complaints of antisemitism were fake or smears. The EHRC said its investigation “points to a culture within the party which, at best, did not do enough to prevent antisemitism and, at worst, could be seen to accept it.”²³⁰ In response to EHRC’s findings, Corbyn rejected the report and claimed, “the scale of the problem was...dramatically overstated for political reasons by our opponents inside and outside the party, as well as by much of the media.”²³¹ Following Corbyn’s remarks and his refusal to retract them, the Labour party suspended Corbyn from the party and removed the whip, meaning he would no longer be part of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Less than three weeks later, Labour’s ruling body, the National Executive Committee (NEC), decided to readmit Corbyn as a party member. However, the decision has been made to withhold the whip from him for at least three months while an investigation into whether he had broken the Parliamentary Labour Party’s code of conduct is underway.²³²

Numerous NGOs have condemned Corbyn’s readmittance and criticized Sir Keir Starmer for not upholding his ‘zero-tolerance’ promise to root out antisemitism from within the party. Claims that the decision reflected a perceived ineffectiveness in the party’s disciplinary process were also widespread.²³³ In December 2020, the NEC approved a draft action plan it was required to submit following EHRC’s report. The plan covers all the recommendations set out in the EHRC probe and contains steps around changing Labour’s procedures and culture. It will be submitted to the EHRC for review.²³⁴

²²⁹ “Antisemitic Ideas on Israel ‘Rise’ Among Labour Voters,” Jewish Chronicle, , September 10, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3qTFyT0>.

²³⁰ “Investigation into Antisemitism in the Labour Party Finds Unlawful Acts of Discrimination and Harassment,” Equality and Human Rights Commission, October 2020, <https://bit.ly/380zz6l>.

²³¹ “Corbyn: Scale of Problem was ‘Dramatically Overstated for Political Reasons’,” Times of Israel, October 29, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3a6bUEg>.

²³² “Jeremy Corbyn to Have Labour Whip Suspended for at Least Three Months,” The Guardian, November 19, 2020, <https://bit.ly/34bSp9A>.

²³³ “Corbyn Reinstated into Labour Without Whip, Will Sit as Independent MP,” JPost, November 18, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3gU5OE>.

²³⁴ “Labour’s Ruling Body Approves Draft Plan Following Damning Antisemitism Report,” Times of Israel, December 8, 2020, <https://bit.ly/34dWOZl>.

3. Coronavirus-Related Antisemitism in the UK

Antisemitism in the UK morphed during the Covid-19 pandemic like it did elsewhere. According to the UK's Commission for Countering Extremism, a government counterterrorism agency, it received numerous reports of misinformation and harmful propaganda across the ideological spectrum, including the far-right, the far-left, and Islamic extremists “exploiting the crisis to promote divisive, xenophobic, and racist narratives “to sow division” and create social discord.”²³⁵ According to the Commission, Neo-Nazis and far-right activists were encouraging followers to purposely infect Jews and Muslims with the coronavirus in an attempt to capitalize on the pandemic. Additionally, Islamist groups spread anti-Western and anti-democratic narratives claiming the virus is divine punishment on the West for alleged “degeneracy” or punishment on China for the country's treatment of Uyghur Muslims.²³⁶

In addition to this, an October 2020 study prepared for the government by Lord John Mann, its Independent Adviser on Antisemitism, and Dr. Lewis Artherton, an expert in health and disease, “called for the government to urgently tackle a resurgence of antisemitism within the fast growing anti-vaccination movement.”²³⁷ The study examined 27 leading anti-vaxxer networks on Facebook and Twitter and found that 79% of them contained strong antisemitic content and conspiracy theories. The report notes the “deep-rooted history” of antisemitic associations between Jews and infectious diseases, and specifies that many of the conspiracy theories present among the anti-vaxxing networks place Jews at the “center of blame for Covid-19.”²³⁸ According to the study, antisemitic conspiracy theories are centered around the notion that “Jews created coronavirus, and that Jews are colluding behind the scenes to destabilize banks and countries through the spread of the virus.”²³⁹ Also common in the anti-vaxxing networks is the notion that Jewish “elites,” such as Bill Gates or George Soros, are “puppet masters” using the Covid-19 pandemic to establish a “New World Order.” (See image to the right.)



Image: A picture from an anti-vaxxing group on Facebook equates Bill Gates with Adolf Hitler.²³⁸

²³⁵ “Neo-Nazis Encouraging Followers to ‘Deliberately Infect’ Jews and Muslims with Coronavirus,” CNN, July 9, 2020, <https://cnn.it/2LANIFh>.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ “New Report Warns that 79% of Anti-Vaccination Networks Host Jew-hate,” Jewish Chronicle, October 21, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3am2XXJ>.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ “From Anti-Vaxxers to Antisemitism: Conspiracy Theory in the Covid-19 Pandemic,” The Office of HM Government’s Independent Adviser on Antisemitism, October 2020, page 9, <https://bit.ly/37feoy5>.

4. BLM and the Twitter Blackout

The American protests over the summer led by the Black Lives Matter movement against the killing of George Floyd and systemic racial inequality in the U.S. quickly garnered international attention and spread to the UK. Protests were organized in solidarity with the American fight for racial equality, and British Jews, like their American counterparts, voiced their support of the movement and issued a statement of solidarity in September 2020.²⁴⁰ However similar to the situation in the United States, antisemitic conspiracy theories regarding the Jewish role in the slave trade, Jewish control over Black entertainers, or Jewish control over the UK's government (more specifically in relation to the Labour party and the recent accusations of antisemitism within Labour), spread through social media platforms in the UK. Additionally, discourse regarding the competition of victimhood between Blacks and Jews also emerged,²⁴¹ and the conspiracy that Israel trained the police officer who killed George Floyd also spread.

In June, ex-Labour activist Jackie Walker, who was expelled from the party in March 2019 for leaked antisemitic remarks, retweeted an article containing a conspiracy theory which minimized the significance of the Holocaust and claimed people cared about the genocide of the Jews only because the victims were “white” and because “it serves the interests of imperialism and capitalism.”²⁴² Later that month in an interview with the Hamas-affiliated *Shehab News Agency* in Gaza, Roger Waters voiced antisemitic conspiracy theories about Jewish “puppet masters” controlling the U.S. government and falsely claimed Israel “invented” the technique used to kill Floyd so it could kill Palestinians and then taught it to U.S. police officers so they would know how to murder Black people.²⁴³ Following public backlash, Waters issued an apology for his comments.²⁴⁴ A few weeks later, the BLM UK chapter came under scrutiny for tweeting “...mainstream British politics is gagged of the right to critique Zionism.”²⁴⁵ British Jewish organizations condemned the statement and pointed out it clearly insinuated that Jews or Zionists have some sort of “control” over British politics;²⁴⁶ an antisemitic trope rooted in age-old conspiracy theories regarding Jewish control and the subjugation of non-Jews.

One month later, following a slew of celebrities who shared conspiracy theories and glorified antisemitic Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan (see section on U.S.), the British rapper Wiley

²⁴⁰ “British Jews Show Solidarity with Black, Asian Communities in UK,” JPost, September 24, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2WaBi3I>.

²⁴¹ This discourse took place in the United States as well, but to a much lesser degree.

²⁴² “Notorious Ex-UK Labour Activist Jackie Walker Claims People Only Care About Holocaust Because Victims Were White,” *Algemeiner*, June 9, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2K1ROjU>.

²⁴³ “Musician Roger Waters on Hamas-Affiliated News Agency: Crazy Puppet Master Adelson has Donald Trump's Tiny Little Prick in his Pocket; Israelis Teach U.S. Police How to Murder Blacks,” MEMRI, June 20, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2LyU6Ye>.

²⁴⁴ “A Note from Roger: Just to be Clear,” <https://rogerwaters.com/just-to-be-clear/>.

²⁴⁵ “Black Lives Matter UK Claim: ‘Politics is Gagged of the Right to Critique Zionism’,” *Jewish Chronicle*, June 28, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3oQmXFS>.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

shared a series of antisemitic posts on Twitter and Instagram. The posts, which included comparing Jews to the Klu Klux Klan and antisemitic conspiracy theories, quickly went viral. After sweeping public outcry, Twitter announced it would lock Wiley's account for one week and Instagram announced it would delete some of his posts for violating its policies. Their response sparked a widespread discussion throughout the UK regarding the extent of antisemitic content on social media platforms and their shortcomings in tackling it. In protest of these shortcomings and the platform's inadequate response to Wiley's tweets, an array of British politicians, celebrities, NGOs, social media influencers, and high-profile figures led a 48-hour Twitter "walkout" on July 27, 2020, during which thousands of Jews and non-Jewish allies participated by using the hashtag "#NoSafeSpaceForJewHate" before logging off.²⁴⁷

5. Efforts at Combating Antisemitism

The British government has encouraged universities and institutions to adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism in order to combat the rise in antisemitism. However, in September a survey conducted by the Union of Jewish Students revealed that almost 80% of institutions had failed to adopt it. In response, the government's Universities Minister and Education Secretary both announced that universities who failed to adopt the IHRA definition before December 31, 2020 would face consequences. As a result, universities throughout the country have adopted the definition. They include Cambridge University,²⁴⁸ Lancaster University, and Buckingham New University, among others.²⁴⁹ The push for institutions to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism has spread to other areas of British culture, such as the recent adoption by the English Premier League, the most widely-watched soccer division in the world.²⁵⁰

January: Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced £500,000 of new funding for a program supporting universities in tackling antisemitism on campus over three years.²⁵¹

January: The Jewish Leadership Council worked alongside the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government to encourage local authorities to adopt the IHRA.²⁵²

February: Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick reaffirmed his commitment that the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will be built next to Parliament.²⁵³

February: British Ambassador to Italy, Jill Morris, hosted a workshop on how to combat rising intolerance and antisemitism.²⁵⁴

July: Port Vale football club suspended and fined player Tom Pope over an antisemitic tweet.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁷ "Thousands Join 48-hour Twitter 'Walkout' to Protest Antisemitism on Platform," Times of Israel, July 27, 2020, <https://bit.ly/347fjP9>.

²⁴⁸ <https://bit.ly/3oPpJuN>.

²⁴⁹ <https://bit.ly/3oPsqwn>.

²⁵⁰ <https://bit.ly/3a9xxn2>.

²⁵¹ <https://bit.ly/2WejG6M>.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ <https://bit.ly/3gM3x1Y>.

²⁵⁴ <https://bit.ly/2Wf1dXG>.

²⁵⁵ <https://bit.ly/3mgnoHL>.

October: Government ministers Michelle Donelan, who serves as Universities Minister, and Gavin Williamson, who serves as Education Secretary, threatened “robust measures” against universities in Britain who don’t comply with the government’s request to adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.²⁵⁶

October: EHRC published their report regarding antisemitism within the Labour party and finds Labour under Jeremy Corbyn was guilty of three unlawful breaches of the Equality Act (see section on Labour Party Antisemitism & the EHRC Report). The report includes recommendations outlined by the EHRC for how Labour can rectify the situation.²⁵⁷

October: A study for the government by Lord John Mann, the government’s Independent Adviser on Antisemitism called on the government to urgently tackle the resurgence of antisemitism within the fast-growing anti-vaccination movement.²⁵⁸

November: The UK has joined Israel, the U.S., Canada, and Australia in forming the Inter-Parliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Antisemitism.²⁵⁹

December: Labour’s ruling body approved a draft action plan following EHRC's report. The move covers all the recommendations set out in the EHRC probe. The draft plan will be handed to the EHRC for review and contains steps around changing Labour’s procedures and culture.²⁶⁰

6. Main Antisemitic Incidents in 2020

January - London: A Jewish boy was punched while riding a bus by an attacker who cursed him and shouted antisemitic slurs.²⁶¹

March - London: A synagogue was targeted with antisemitic ‘Zoombombing’ campaign during virtual services.²⁶²

April - London: A woman threw bricks at Jews while shouting “kill all the Jews.”²⁶³

May - Brent: Councilor Aslam Choudry is investigated by the Labour Party for posting antisemitic video to WhatsApp.²⁶⁴

May: A bomb threat against the Board of Deputies of British Jews was posted to Facebook.²⁶⁵

June - Stoke Newington: Man charged with attempted murder after stabbing a Rabbi.²⁶⁶

June: Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer fired shadow Education Secretary Rebecca Long-Bailey for retweeting an article claiming that Israeli forces trained American police on how to kill Blacks.²⁶⁷

²⁵⁶ <https://bit.ly/346YXWU>.

²⁵⁷ <https://bit.ly/3qXtd07>.

²⁵⁸ <https://bit.ly/3oPtfFt>.

²⁵⁹ <https://cnn.it/3meXaVR>.

²⁶⁰ <https://bit.ly/37UzCAs>.

²⁶¹ <https://bit.ly/3qWb0A4>.

²⁶² <https://bbc.in/34av33U>.

²⁶³ <https://bit.ly/3mnV8ml>.

²⁶⁴ <https://bit.ly/380gZvg>.

²⁶⁵ <https://bit.ly/3pj5vTV>.

²⁶⁶ <https://bit.ly/2WdJ10U>.

²⁶⁷ <https://bbc.in/37UGqhu>.

July: Labour MP Steve Reed tweets antisemitic “puppet master” conspiracy theory. Following condemnation, Reed issued an apology.²⁶⁸

July: Rapper Wiley goes on antisemitic rampage on Twitter and Instagram; sparking a 48-hour virtual Twitter ‘walkout’ over the platform’s handling of antisemitic posts.²⁶⁹

August - Harrow: Two elderly patients were beaten by a healthcare worker after being ‘identified’ as Jewish.²⁷⁰

August: The entire board at the UK’s top Muslim charity resigns over official’s praise for Hamas.²⁷¹

September - London: Jewish couple targeted in violent attack.²⁷²

September: Senior BBC journalist, Nimesh Thaker, used an anonymous account to incite and support attacks on Jewish TV presenter Emma Barnett.²⁷³

October: EHRC Labour Antisemitism Report is published and reveals antisemitism under Corbyn and three breaches of the Equality Act.²⁷⁴

October: The Housing and Communities Secretary, Robert Jenrick, received death threats against him and his family for his role in the proposed Westminster Holocaust Memorial.²⁷⁵

November: Jewish Labour Movement and Jewish Labour MPs report growing antisemitic abuse.²⁷⁶

December: Neale Hanvey, a member of the Scottish National Party who was suspended British Parliament for antisemitism, was reinstated by his party and has been elected to serve on his party’s disciplinary board.²⁷⁷

²⁶⁸ <https://bit.ly/3njsFiW>.

²⁶⁹ <https://cnn.it/3gLHGYp>.

²⁷⁰ <https://bit.ly/34aBELU>.

²⁷¹ <https://bit.ly/37gEX6n>.

²⁷² ACMS Monthly Report – September 2020.

²⁷³ <https://bit.ly/3ncFYlj>.

²⁷⁴ <https://bbc.in/37dsksx>.

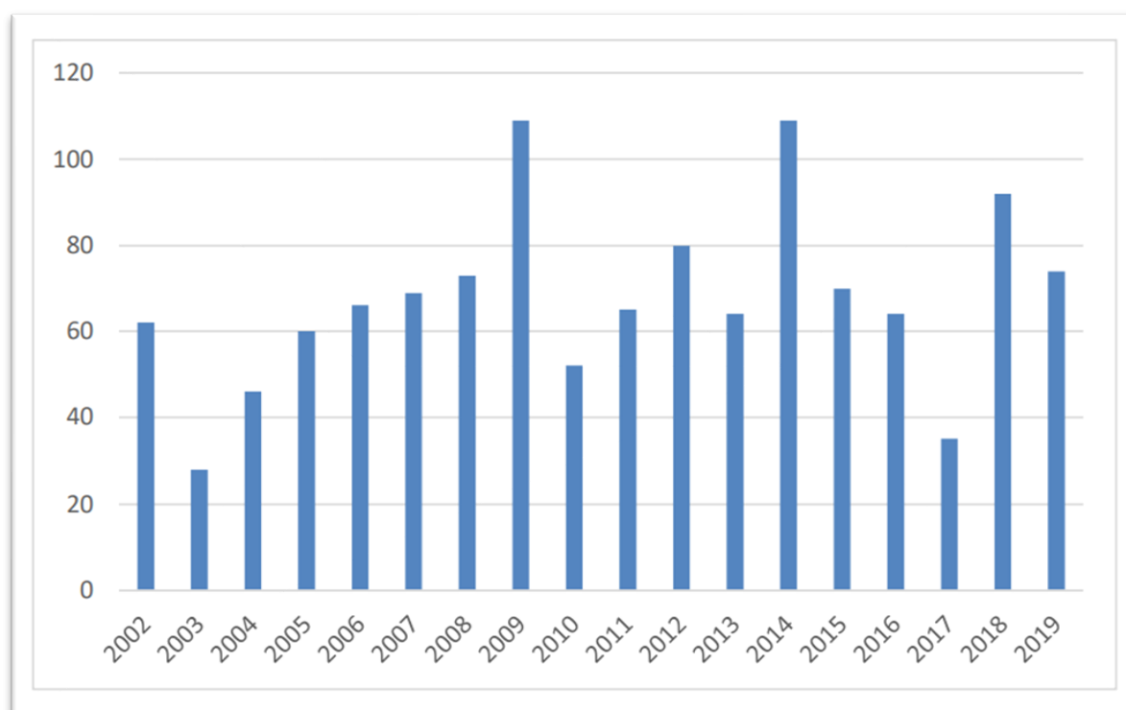
²⁷⁵ <https://bit.ly/3gKnvKs>.

²⁷⁶ ACMS Monthly Report – November 2020.

²⁷⁷ <https://bit.ly/2KqCflr>.

BELGIUM

1. General Trends



Antisemitic incidents recorded in Belgium between 2002 and 2019.

According to the latest report published by Antisemitisme.be in April 2020,²⁷⁸ the main civil society organization that records data on antisemitism in Belgium, the number of antisemitic acts decreased by 20% in Belgium in 2019, from 92 in 2018 to 74 in 2019. This slight downward trend should be taken with caution considering that many Belgian Jews, especially the secular Jewish community of Brussels, avoid wearing or displaying Jewish symbols in public. Brussels and Antwerp were the most affected cities and accounted for 31% of antisemitic incidents in 2019.²⁷⁹ The only physical assault recorded in 2019 took place in Antwerp. Regarding the situation of antisemitism for 2020, although no official data has yet to be published, the President of the Belgian Federation of Jewish Organizations (CCOJB), Yohan Benizri, notes a “negative evolution.”

In addition, Belgian Jews are subject to rising antisemitic hatred originating mainly from Radical Islam, the Far-Right, and the Far-left. Belgium’s Coordination Unit for Threat Assessment (OCAM) has already warned of extreme strains of Islam in Belgium.²⁸⁰ In parallel, traditional form of antisemitism persist and seem to find renewed vigor. Belgium’s far-right party Vlaams Belang (“Flemish Interest”) has more than tripled its electorate, emerging as the country’s second largest party in the May 2019 federal elections. Recent surveys show that the party is now leading in the

²⁷⁸ 2019 Report on antisemitism by Antisemitisme.be, April 2020. <https://bit.ly/2LOj6dX>.

²⁷⁹ Jews represent a minority of some 35,000 in Belgium, most of whom live in Antwerp and Brussels.

²⁸⁰ <http://politi.co/3ngvMHH>.

polls in the Flemish region.²⁸¹ The party, whose founders included collaborators with Nazi Germany and whose lawmakers have a rich history of antisemitism, won about 15% of the 2019 national vote—its highest result ever.

2. Responses to Antisemitism from Institutions and the Government

Many Belgian Jews often perceive Belgian authorities as lax on antisemitic hate speech; prompting concern that antisemitism has gained a level of mainstream acceptance that is quite uncommon in other Western European nations.²⁸² Moreover, an EU Eurobarometer poll released in 2019 revealed a gap between general Belgian public perceptions of antisemitism and those of the Jewish community. The poll found that while 87% of Belgium Jews polled said antisemitism had increased over the past five years,²⁸³ only 36% of Belgian people felt it had.²⁸⁴ Similarly, 86% of Belgian Jews said that antisemitism is a problem in their country, while only 50% of general Belgian respondents did.

In addition, some members of Belgium's Jewish community express fears over the new government's composition; a center-left coalition which emerged on September 30, 2020 after 16 months of political paralysis. Some warned that the new coalition was composed of several ministers who are highly critical of Israel and that the country appointed a justice minister who has publicly spoken of a "Jewish lobby."²⁸⁵

Police Set Up Hotline to Report Antisemitism, January 2020

Belgian police will open an online hotline for reporting antisemitic and racist incidents.²⁸⁶

According to Michael Freilich, a Jewish member of Belgian parliament, Belgian Jews no longer trust UNIA, the state's watchdog on racism, and its hotline.

Belgian Prime Minister Reacts to Controversial Aalst Carnival, February 2020

Following international outcry, Belgium's then-Prime Minister Sophie Wilmes, the daughter of a Jewish mother who lost several relatives in the Holocaust, spoke out on the annual carnival of Aalst;²⁸⁷ a highly controversial annual parade which included caricatures of Jews with hooked noses, obsessed with money, and dressed up like insects. Wilmes called the representations of the Jewish community at the Aalst carnival "prejudicial to our values as well as to the reputation of our

²⁸¹ <http://bit.ly/3rSy2IH>.

²⁸² <http://bit.ly/2XczMyd>.

²⁸³ Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2018.

<https://bit.ly/3au5IWP>.

²⁸⁴ Special Eurobarometer 484: Perceptions of antisemitism, January 2019. Survey and report by Kantar Public Brussels on behalf of Kantar Belgium at the request of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers. <https://bit.ly/3nwKHhT>.

²⁸⁵ <http://bit.ly/2MsH8eR>.

²⁸⁶ <http://bit.ly/3oh7Kxv>.

²⁸⁷ <http://bit.ly/3b9Fo4C>.

country,” adding that legal institutions will “determine whether the events which took place during the carnival break the law.” In December 2019, UNESCO removes the famed Belgian carnival town of Aalst from its Cultural Heritage list after officials found the “recurrence of racist and antisemitic representations” to be incompatible with its principles.²⁸⁸

Gradual Withdrawal of Military Operation Protecting Sensitive Locations, October 2020

Antwerp’s Jewish community sounded the alarm on a plan announced by Belgium’s new government to gradually bring an end to a counterterrorism *operation* called *Vigilant Guardian*, warning that they will lose military protection.²⁸⁹ Antwerp’s Jewish community has about 100 Jewish institutions servicing a predominantly ultra-Orthodox population of 18,000 people.

Background - *Operation Vigilant Guardian* started in 2015 following the Islamist terror attack against *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris and the dismantling of a terrorist cell in Verviers.²⁹⁰ Military personnel were deployed to secure locations considered sensitive, including embassies (in particular in the US, the UK, and Israel) and religious, particularly Jewish, institutions. Roughly €4 million were allocated to reinforce security at Jewish institutions.²⁹¹ The whole operation cost more than €200 million in five years.²⁹² At the beginning of the operation, only 150 military members were mobilized, but the number of personnel has steadily increased to reach 1,800 soldiers by 2016. Since 2017, a more dynamic approach to patrolling was adopted, and the number of soldiers deployed on the streets gradually reduced (550 soldiers in mid-2018). Finally, the new government which was sworn into office in October 2020 adopted a plan pushed by the defense establishment to bring an end to *Operation Vigilant Guardian*. In November 2020, the Council of Ministers approved a gradual troop withdrawal and the end of the operation by September 2021.²⁹³ It should be noted that the previous redeployment in 2017 coincides with a sharp increase in antisemitic incidents (see graph above).

3. The Ban on Ritual Slaughter

In December 2020, the European Court of Justice, EU's highest court, ruled that national authorities can order mandatory stunning for animals before slaughter, backing a Flemish decision to require the use of stunning for livestock.²⁹⁴ “The court concludes that the measures contained in the decree allow a fair balance to be struck between the importance attached to animal welfare and the freedom of Jewish and Muslim believers to manifest their religion,” the ruling said. The decision sparked outcry from Jewish and Muslim groups. “This decision goes even further than expected and flies in the face of recent statements from the European institutions that Jewish life is to be treasured and respected,” said Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, head of the Conference of

²⁸⁸ <http://cnn.it/3rSylDI>.

²⁸⁹ <http://bit.ly/2MpDFh8>.

²⁹⁰ <http://bit.ly/359cwWa>.

²⁹¹ <https://bit.ly/2KUdG1c>.

²⁹² <http://bit.ly/38pVVOG>.

²⁹³ <http://bit.ly/3pUzigJ>.

²⁹⁴ Court of Justice of the European Union PRESS RELEASE No 163/20. <https://bit.ly/3rct2y9>.

European Rabbis.²⁹⁵ Belgium's Jewish umbrella group, CCOJB, said it would take its legal fight to the European Court of Human Rights. The ruling came as a surprise as it went contrary to an advice issued in September 2020 by the advocate-general of the European Court of Justice Gerard Hogan who said that Flanders' ban on halal and kosher slaughter should be overturned as it does not comply with EU law.²⁹⁶ Hogan's advice was not binding on the court.

Background – The questioning of ritual slaughter gave many Jews the feeling that they are no longer welcome in Belgium. Although religious slaughter is not prohibited at the federal level, two of Belgium's three states, Flanders and Wallonia, have adopted legislation to ban the slaughter of animals without stunning.²⁹⁷ The Brussels region, however, does not appear to have adopted any similar prohibitions yet. Both the Walloon decree and the Flemish decree have been challenged by Jewish and Muslim leaders before the Belgian Constitutional Court as possible violations of religious freedom.²⁹⁸ The case was then referred to the European Court of Justice, the EU's highest court, by Belgium's Constitutional Court whose final decision should set a precedent for the rest of Europe. Some believe the animal welfare argument has been hijacked by far-right politicians to push a populist and anti-migrant agenda.²⁹⁹

4. Main Antisemitic Incidents in 2020

AALST, February 2020 – Over a dozen complaints were made to UNIA (Belgium's anti-discrimination center) after attendants at Aalst's carnival donned costumes deemed antisemitic,³⁰⁰ including a group of carnival-goers who paraded in full-body insect suits and oversized shtreimels. For the second consecutive year, the Flemish city drew harsh criticism over costumes and floats depicting Jews in stereotypical fashion. The mayor of Aalst doubled down on its defense of the carnival, saying the event "could not be labelled as antisemitic."

ONLINE, February 2020 – Amid Aalst carnival controversy, Vincent Van Quickenborne, the new Justice Minister who was then mayor of the city of Kortrijk, tweeted, "The Jewish lobby is working extra hours."³⁰¹

BRUSSELS, June 2020 – A video shared on social media showed demonstrators chanting in Arabic the slogan "Khaybar, Khaybar oh Jews, the army of Muhammad will return," at a pro-Palestine demonstration in Brussels. The chant is a reference to the historic battle of Khaybar in which Jews were massacred by Muslims in the seventh century.

²⁹⁵ <http://bbc.in/3mv48q4>.

²⁹⁶ <https://bit.ly/2WDFFEh>.

²⁹⁷ <http://bit.ly/3rf3iBh>.

²⁹⁸ <http://bit.ly/34wJAHr>.

²⁹⁹ <http://politi.co/3rcziGd>.

³⁰⁰ <http://bit.ly/3h5Km3f>.

³⁰¹ <https://bit.ly/2KqaOnk>.

AUSTRIA

2020 was characterized by a rise of antisemitism, but also by especially warm relations between Austria's Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and the government's firm stand against antisemitism, which has led to a series of government decisions aimed at combating antisemitism and safeguarding Jewish life in Austria. Moreover, since the Vienna terror attack on November 2, 2020, which began next to the Stadttempel, Vienna's main synagogue³⁰², there is an increasing awareness in Austrian society of the Islamist threat, which is a major threat to the Jewish community. The terror attack reminded many of the 1981 terror attack on the Stadttempel carried out by a Palestinian extremist group.³⁰³ The Jewish community, security experts, and teachers have repeatedly warned of the Islamist threat, but a major share of Austrian citizens denied it. The Jewish community was shocked but not surprised by the recent terror attack against Austrian civilians since Jews are constantly aware of the threat and are under alert. Jewish institutions are protected by security personnel and the Austrian police, and Jews regularly get instructions on necessary safety measures.

1. General Trends

According to antisemitism reports published by the Vienna Jewish community (IKG) from 2019 and the first half of 2020, antisemitism in Austria is on the rise. In 2019, 550 antisemitic incidents were recorded, a rise of 9.5% compared to the previous year and of 116% compared to five years ago. Among the incidents were six physical attacks, including attacks on Jewish children in Vienna public transportation.³⁰⁴ The IKG report from the first half of 2020 shows the upward trend will likely continue in 2020. It recorded a total of 257 antisemitic incidents, among them 3 physical attacks. They include a violent physical assault by two teenagers on a 16-year-old Jewish student in Graz.³⁰⁵ The report reveals a significant decrease in March and April, which coincides with the start of Covid-19 and the lockdown.³⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the total number of incidents corresponds to around half the number of antisemitic incidents in 2019. In the first half of 2020, there was an average of 43 antisemitic incidents per month, while in the months without a lockdown, the average was 50 incidents a month. This is clearly above the 2019 monthly average of 45.8 incidents. It should be

³⁰² At the time of the terror attack, the building, which houses the Vienna Jewish community's offices, Vienna's main synagogue, and a kosher restaurant, were closed at that time. It is assumed that the terror attack did not have an antisemitic motive.

³⁰³ In the attack on Saturday August 29, 1981, by two supporters of the Palestinian extremist group "Fatah Revolutionary Council," which was led by terrorist Abu Nidal, two people were killed and 21 people were injured. The two terrorists expected that people would leave the building after the service, but due to a bar mitzvah kiddush, most people remained inside the building.

³⁰⁴ <https://www.ikg-wien.at/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ab2019down.pdf>.

The antisemitic incidents also included 18 threats, 78 property damages (an increase by over 50%), 209 antisemitic mass letters, and 239 cases of hurtful behavior.

³⁰⁵ https://fca755ac-004d-4a98-bf62-6ebd5ba1ecc3.filesusr.com/ugd/0a9e18_64f4d46da51346d6b13ece884bfd7b70.pdf; The antisemitic incidents also included 8 threats, 26 property damages, 81 mass mailings, 139 cases of harmful behavior.

³⁰⁶ The "lockdown" started on March 16th and gradually opened from April 14th onwards.

noted that the numbers exclusively include reported cases that have been verified by the office's experts. According to IKG General Secretary Benjamin Nägele, it can be assumed that there is a high number of unreported incidents. This is likely due to a lack of belief among the Jewish community that serious action will be taken against the perpetrators of antisemitic incidents. For example, two separate cases recently came to light in which Jewish citizens attempted to report an antisemitic insult to the police, but were met with the officers' refusal to accept the report. To enhance the trust of complainants and ensure accurate recordings of antisemitic incidents, the IKG recently proposed a change to the process of how police officers record them. They suggested it be mandatory that antisemitism is listed as the motive for a criminal act at the time the complaint for an antisemitic incident is made.

In the second half of 2020, two violent physical attacks on Jewish persons shocked the Jewish community and were fiercely condemned by the political elite, including President Alexander Van der Bellen, Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, and Interior Minister Karl Nehammer.

- In August, a Syrian citizen who came to Austria six years ago committed a string of three attacks targeting the Graz synagogue and Jewish community center within a few days. On Wednesday, August 19th, he vandalized the outer walls of the building with anti-Israel graffiti and caused damage to the final remainders of the Graz synagogue destroyed during Kristallnacht. Then, on Friday night, he threw several bricks at the synagogue's windows; breaking one and damaging several others. His string of attacks culminated in a violent physical assault against the President of the Graz Jewish Community, Elie Rosen. On Saturday, August 22nd, he attacked Rosen with a wooden bat in front of the synagogue. Rosen succeeded to get back into his car and quickly locked the doors. The attacker hit the vehicle with the bat several times before he fled. It appears the perpetrator didn't fear punishment since he kept returning to the synagogue to commit increasingly violent attacks. Consequently, representatives of all political parties condemned the attacks and Interior Minister Karl Nehammer ordered increased surveillance of all Jewish institutions in Austria.
- On November 26th, a Rabbi was threatened with a knife, physically assaulted, and antisemitically abused by a woman at a tram stop in Vienna's Landstrasse district. She shouted "Slaughter all Jews," kicked the Rabbi, and threw his hat and kippah off his head while bystanders didn't interfere to help him.

2. The Extremist Scenes in Austria

An analysis of reports by the IKG, the Interior Ministry, and the Austrian Federal Agency for State Protection and Counter-Terrorism (BVT) indicates a growing trend of a decrease in extreme right-wing crimes, an increase in crimes perpetrated by the extreme Left, and an increase in crimes perpetrated by radical Muslims. It should be noted that according to the IKG, no ideological background can be attributed to the majority of antisemitic crimes (59% in 2019 and 65% in 2020).

2.1 The Extreme Right

A comparison between antisemitic incidents with clear ideological backgrounds in the two IKG reports shows that although most cases are motivated by extreme-right antisemitism, the share of antisemitic incidents initiated by right-wing extremists decreased from 82.7% in 2019 to 50.6% in the first half of 2020. Likewise, the BVT also reported a decline in crimes perpetrated by right-wing extremists, including antisemitic ones, from 1,075 in 2018 to 954 in 2019. That being said, the report specified that “right-wing extremist violence, aggression, and agitation is assessed as a potential risk for disturbing public peace, order, and security in Austria.” Only the number of breaches of the Prohibition Act³⁰⁷ rose between 2018 and 2019 from 877 to 1,037 cases.³⁰⁸ Additionally, an analysis of the reports published by the Interior Ministry for the first halves of 2019³⁰⁹ and 2020³¹⁰ shows a continuation of the decline in right-wing acts of crime which includes antisemitic ones.³¹¹

In 2020, right-wing extremists sought to promote themselves as the driving force behind the rallies against governmental Coronavirus restrictions which were attended by people of various milieus. The main right-wing propagators were the “DO5 - Die Österreicher,”³¹² the follow-up project of the “Identitarian Movement” (IBÖ), right-wing extremist fraternities, and individual activists from the neo-Nazi scene. Like in Germany, the protesters championed antisemitic conspiracy theories and Holocaust trivialization. For example, at a Vienna protest against Coronavirus restrictions on April 24th, demonstrators trampled on the Holocaust memorial of the “street-washing Jew” at the Albertina Square, and shouted “We are the Jews” to express their belief that Austria is once again a fascist state which is persecuting its citizens. They compared themselves to the Jews during the Holocaust, thus abusing the memory of Holocaust victims and trivializing Nazi atrocities. However, in contrast to Germany (see chapter on Germany), the protests in Austria were smaller in number and less extreme. As a result, they didn’t gain any momentum or make much of an impact.

2.2 The Radical Muslim Scene

According to the IKG reports, the share of antisemitic incidents initiated by Muslims rose from 7.7% to 19%, and Muslims were responsible for the vast majority of physical attacks on Jews. The 2019

³⁰⁷ The Prohibition Act (Verbotsgesetz, BGBl. Nr. 13/1945, including amendments up to 1992) prohibits the founding or supporting of associations or parties that carry on the National Socialist ideas or ideology, and any form of endorsement, denial, or belittlement of the Holocaust or other crimes of the Nazi regime. It is forbidden to do so in print, on the radio, in any media, or publicly in a way that it becomes accessible to many people.

³⁰⁸ https://www.bvt.gv.at/401/files/VS_B_2019_Webversion_20201120.pdf.

³⁰⁹ https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXVI/AB/AB_03836/imfname_764730.pdf.

³¹⁰ https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXVII/AB/AB_02596/imfname_817588.pdf.

³¹¹ 253 acts of crime perpetrated by right-wing extremists, among them 13 antisemitic ones, were reported in the first half of 2020 compared to 304 and 19, respectively, in the first half of 2019. These numbers are not considered to be final numbers, as cases for the respective time frames can still be reported after the publication of the reports.

³¹² “The Austrians - DO5” is the new project by IBÖ spokesman Martin Sellner, which he founded after it became known in March 2019 that he had received a donation for IBÖ from the Christchurch shooter, and it thus became difficult for the IBÖ to start effective media campaigns, mobilize people, or receive financial support. DO5 is inspired by O5, a bourgeois-conservative Austrian resistance group against the Nazi regime. The number 5 also refers to the so-called “5-point plan” with which the alleged Great Replacement is to be stopped.

report by the BVT stresses that Islamist extremism poses a persistent and elevated threat to Austria which stems specifically from returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF)³¹³ and local Islamist groups and networks in the so-called “home-grown” scene. These groups are made up primarily of people who have converted to Islam or young Muslims who belong to the second and third generation of immigrants. Many of them were radicalized through social media and internet forums featuring Islamist or jihadist content, as well as by radicals in their social circles, mosques, or in prisons. It should be noted that radicalization often occurs during life crises and it is estimated that there are 70-150 highly radicalized people in Austria.³¹⁴ The terrorist who killed four and injured 22 in the Vienna terror attack on November 2nd fits these descriptions. He was radicalized during a life crisis, had tried to get to Syria to join ISIS, but was stopped in Turkey and sentenced to prison in Austria. He was in contact with radical Islamists and apparently part of an international ISIS network.

2.3 The Extreme Left

The 2019 report by the BVT³¹⁵ showed a rise in crimes perpetrated by left-wing extremist groups from 137 in 2018 to 218 in 2019. Additionally, according to the IKG reports, the share of antisemitic incidents initiated by the left-wing extremists rose from 9.6% to 30.4%, and most are connected with the BDS movement, which was increasingly active in the first half of 2020. This is likely as a reaction to the anti-BDS resolutions that were recently passed at the federal, state, and municipal levels.³¹⁶

3. Efforts at Combatting Antisemitism

While antisemitism is rising, the Austrian government has taken important steps this year to combat antisemitism, safeguard the Jewish community, and combat extremism. Several more resolutions and plans are waiting to be developed further and accepted by the government. The Jewish community and the Austrian government repeatedly highlight their close cooperation on issues concerning Austrian Jewry. Thus, immediately after the violent attack on the president of the Graz Jewish community, Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution at the Austrian Federal Chancellery Karoline Edtstadler, IKG President Oscar Deutsch, and European Commission Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism Katharina von Schnurbein, met and discussed the attack. The meeting focused on refining measures to protect and promote Jewish life in Austria and throughout Europe.

This year was also characterized by a very warm relationship between Chancellor Sebastian Kurz and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Thus, in May, Kurz repeatedly credited Netanyahu for Austria’s quick dealing with the Coronavirus outbreak. Austrian newspapers all positively

³¹³ At the end of 2019, the BVT was aware of a total of 326 people from Austria who were or wanted to participate actively in jihad in Syria and Iraq; 93 people returned to Austria and 62 could be prevented from leaving and are still in the federal territory.

³¹⁴ https://www.falter.at/zeitung/20201118/vom-beserlpark-ins-kalifat/_d47e8a6f29.

³¹⁵ https://www.bvt.gv.at/401/files/VSB_2019_Webversion_20201120.pdf.

³¹⁶ https://fca755ac-004d-4a98-bf62-6ebd5ba1ecc3.filesusr.com/ugd/0a9e18_64f4d46da51346d6b13ece884bfd7b70.pdf.

highlighted Netanyahu's influence on Austria's approach to handling the Covid-19 crisis. Moreover, Austria also increasingly stood by Israel's side during EU meetings and UN votes against Israel.³¹⁷ The issue of combating antisemitism was featured prominently in the program objectives of the new coalition government between the Österreichische Volkspartei (Austrian People's Party) and the Grüne (Green) party.³¹⁸ The program states that the federal government is heading the fight against antisemitism and anti-Zionism in Austria and at the European level, and presents a holistic strategy to prevent and combat all forms of antisemitism. The strategy includes the creation of a research and documentation center for antisemitism, improving formal and informal Holocaust education, and rendering the Prohibition Act more stringent. The program also mentions Austria's special connection to Israel, the "Jewish and democratic state." Currently, the government is working on a national action plan against antisemitism which contains approximately 30 measures. The plan is to include measures in the areas of education, research, justice, and security. A separate staff unit will be set up in the Chancellery and will be dedicated to the implementation of the measures. Aside from these plans, several other measures to combat antisemitism, safeguard the Jewish community, strengthen Austria's connections with Jews around the world, and commemorate the Holocaust were implemented throughout the year. The main measures include:

4.1 Measures Taken to Combat Antisemitism

February: The Austrian parliament unanimously passed a resolution condemning the BDS movement and all forms of antisemitism, including antisemitism related to Israel. The resolution calls upon the government to develop a holistic strategy to prevent and combat all forms of antisemitism. It also demands the government withhold federal funds from and avoid cooperation with antisemitic organizations and individuals, including the BDS movement.

May: Austrian parliament unanimously accepted the motion for a resolution demanding the federal government take decisive action using all constitutional means against terrorist and criminal activities by Hezbollah supporters in Austria, prevent the financing of Hezbollah through money laundering activities, and encourage a reassessment of how to deal with Hezbollah within the European Union. The speakers at the parliament session all agreed that the separation between a military and a political arm of Hezbollah is inaccurate, especially since Hezbollah itself does not make this separation.

May: The Styrian parliament unanimously opposed any form of antisemitism and took a clear stand against the BDS movement.

³¹⁷ In May, Austria and Hungary prevented the EU from issuing a statement calling on Israel to abandon annexation plans in the West Bank. This declaration was supported by 25 EU member states. Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg stated that Austria rejected a "prejudgment" against Israel. Concerning UN votes, it is the second year in a row that Austria began shifting away from voting in favor of the one-sided resolutions criticizing Israel. For example, Austria voted for the first time against renewing the mandate for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), which, according to the ADL, has served as a forum for anti-Israel rhetoric and represents the worst example of institutionalized anti-Israel bias in the United Nations.

³¹⁸ https://www.dieneuevolkspartei.at/Download/Regierungsprogramm_2020.pdf.

July: The Austrian Parliament launched the Simon Wiesenthal Prize: €30,000 will be granted annually to three people or groups for activities against antisemitism and the promotion of Holocaust education.

July: The Integration Ministry unveiled the Documentation Center for Political Islam. The center will research political Islam, its structures, and possibly existing parallel societies.

July: The parliament adopted a resolution calling on the Interior Minister to examine legal options regarding a future ban of the annual fascist Ustaša meeting in Bleiburg. The event is considered one of the largest gatherings of fascists and neo-Nazis in Europe. In recent years, tens of thousands of people came to Bleiburg to commemorate members of the Waffen SS, the Wehrmacht, and the soldiers of the fascist and ultranationalist Ustaša organization, which headed the Independent State of Croatia, a World War II era puppet government of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

November: Since November 1st, all reported hate crimes have to be statistically recorded as such immediately when the complaint is reported. The aim is to achieve a permanently updated picture of the situation on 'hate crime' offenses (such as antisemitic incidents), enable structured investigations, and based on this, propose effective measures.

4.2 Measures Taken to Safeguard the Jewish Community, Strengthen Connections with Jews Abroad, and Commemorate the Holocaust

September: The IKG and the federal government have reached a historic agreement for the long-term security of Jewish life in Austria. The government is launching a new bill stating that the Republic of Austria will support the IKG Vienna with €4 million per year. This triples the previous security funding, which was regulated in an agreement between the IKG Vienna and the Ministry of the Interior. The bill has been handed over to Parliament and passed the first reading.

September: The new Citizenship Law came into effect. It allows Holocaust survivors who were citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or those who lived in Austria before March 12, 1938, and their descendants, to obtain Austrian citizenship without being required by Austria to relinquish their current one.

June: A ceremony in the Ostarrichi Park, a centrally located park in Vienna, attended by representatives of the Austrian Parliament and the Jewish community heralded the start of the construction of the "Memorial to the Jewish Children, Women, and Men of Austria Who Were Murdered in the Shoah." The monument that will be erected will consist of an oval arrangement of several stone walls featuring the names of the over 64,000 murdered Austrian Jews.

SPAIN

This year, antisemitism in Spain was mainly characterized by political events or various BDS activities that involved New and Islamic antisemitism. Most of the physical incidents consisted of various vandalism events, and graffiti incidents in big cities.³¹⁹ One of the most notable antisemitic events took place in February at the carnival during the traditional celebration in Badajoz. The costume parade included participants dressed up as officers in Nazi uniforms and prisoners in concentration camp uniforms.³²⁰ Similar incidents also occurred that week at Campo de Criptana, (south of Madrid). Leading these agendas are first and second-generation immigrants from Arab countries and members of radical left-wing parties. Spain's radical left-wing party, "Podemos," which is part of the current coalition, has previously been accused of receiving funding from Hugo Chavez's government in Venezuela and the Iranian regime.³²¹ Its members, including Chairman Pablo Iglesias, have repeatedly spoken out against Israel's right to exist, and have taken a prominent pro-Palestinian stance with a distinct antisemitic tone. Last January, the party's chairman and deputy prime minister said he supported the boycott on the State of Israel and stated Israel is an "illegal" state.³²² In recent years in Valencia, PSOE, Compromís, and Podemos parties collaborated with BDS País Valencià.³²³

It is important to note that on the other side of the political map is the right-wing party VOX. This party, which is presented by the political left as an extreme right-wing party, regularly expresses its support for the State of Israel, and the party's website praises Israeli democracy and what they perceive as "Israel's struggle against Islamic fundamentalism" and Israel's character as a "technological laboratory." Party members also condemned the BDS movement and support further strengthening ties with Israel in all fields.³²⁴ This political division is also reflected in the antisemitic discourse: the far-right sees left-wing parties as parties with a "Marxist or Jewish ideology," and on the other hand, left-wing parties see the VOX party's support for Israel as proof of a Jewish connection with capitalism and imperialism and therefore link the Palestinian struggle for independence to a general struggle against right-wing ideologies.

In July 2020, the Spanish government officially adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.³²⁵ In response, the President of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain (FCJE) stated that this step shows a "clear commitment by the Spanish government to fight against antisemitism."³²⁶

³¹⁹ See detailed antisemitic cases in the report.

³²⁰ <https://bit.ly/3iV4qWU>

³²¹ <https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2020/07/22/5f18558bfc6c83b4228b458d.html>.

³²² <https://www.timesofisrael.com/spanish-pm-taps-politician-who-called-israel-an-illegal-country-as-his-deputy/>.

³²³ <https://bit.ly/3iU9pr7>.

³²⁴ <https://www.aurora-israel.co.il/vox-la-extrema-derecha-pro-israel>.

³²⁵ <https://israelnoticias.com/antisemitismo/espana-definicion-antisemitismo-ihra/>.

³²⁶ <https://bit.ly/2YC2fOZ>

AUSTRALIA

According to the Annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), there were 368 reported antisemitic incidents from October 2018-September 2019. “The incidents were logged by volunteer Community Security Groups (CSGs), official Jewish state roof bodies, and the ECAJ. The total figure consists of 225 attacks and 143 threats.”³²⁷ The most notable increase in reported incidents involved “direct verbal abuse, harassment, and intimidation from 88 in 2018 to 114 in 2019, and in the number of reported graffiti attacks from 46 to 95.”³²⁸ The concern of a rise in White Supremacist propaganda is prevalent among Australian security agencies. In June 2020, an ASIO threat assessment specified that “right-wing extremists now make up around a third of all domestic ASIO investigations, with the Spy Agency warning that the far-right is using COVID-19 as cover to push its dangerous ideas and recruit new members.”³²⁹ The manner in which these groups act is particularly threatening given their ability to organize and collaborate over shared dangerous beliefs. According to ‘All Together Now’ managing director, Priscilla Brice, Australia has experienced a surge in online hate emanating from far-right extremists. These extremists have used the Coronavirus pandemic to spread antisemitism and neo-Nazi sentiments online “in the form of conspiracy theories blaming Jewish people for spreading the virus and for manipulating the pandemic to expand their power and global control.”³³⁰

Main Antisemitic Incidents in 2020

February: Threatening envelopes with antisemitic letters were sent to the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) and a prominent Jewish individual.³³¹

March: Police arrest antisemitic neo-Nazi for planning a deadly terror attack.³³²

May: A Jewish man was harassed with antisemitic slurs in Melbourne while walking.³³³

June: The *Australian Financial Review* published an antisemitic caricature of the country’s Jewish treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, and issues an apology after receiving backlash.³³⁴

June: A kindergarten was defaced with antisemitic graffiti including the words “4th Reich” and a Star of David. The incident prompted MPs from both sides aisle to condemn the attack.³³⁵

July: Several antisemitic incidents reported in schools throughout Australia prompt the Victoria Department of Education to launch an investigation into antisemitic bullying.³³⁶

³²⁷ “Report on Antisemitism in Australia 2019,” Executive Council of Australian Jewry, November 24, 2019, page 7, <https://bit.ly/2JEJLJz>.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ “ASIO Briefing Warns that the Far-Right is Exploiting Coronavirus to Recruit New Members,” ABC News, June 12, 2020, <https://ab.co/3pOrVU1>.

³³⁰ “Antisemitism a Virus Symptom,” Australian Jewish News Times of Israel, June 15, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2X7rliu>.

³³¹ <https://bit.ly/3n4ZvTL>.

³³² <https://bit.ly/388Np8b>.

³³³ <https://bit.ly/38WtUi7>.

³³⁴ <https://bit.ly/3pHHVaf>.

³³⁵ <https://bit.ly/3b4vaIR>.

³³⁶ <https://bit.ly/3pWm3Z1>.

August: A synagogue in Brisbane was threatened by the neo-Nazi National Socialist Network.³³⁷

September: Large bookstore chain 'Dymocks' was condemned for selling an antisemitic book entitled *The Jews and their Lies*. It is commonly used by Nazis to justify the Holocaust.³³⁸

October: Neo-Nazi group 'National Socialist Network' expands presence to Adelaide.³³⁹

November: A Jewish man in Melbourne was harassed by a couple repeatedly shouting "Heil Hitler" while performing the Nazi salute.³⁴⁰

November: In an animated video about plagiarism, collusion, and contract cheating, Monash University used a visibly Orthodox Jewish caricature as the culprit. Following backlash, the character was replaced.³⁴¹

December: An 18-year-old from Albury was charged with terrorism related offenses for sharing posts on social media containing antisemitism, neo-Nazism, White Supremacism, and extreme right-wing ideologies.³⁴²

³³⁷ <https://bit.ly/3546pmg>.

³³⁸ <https://bit.ly/3866Puf>.

³³⁹ <https://bit.ly/2LdwQPd>.

³⁴⁰ <https://bit.ly/2LahESZ>.

³⁴¹ <https://bit.ly/354Lj7e>.

³⁴² <https://bit.ly/3rYQZJU>.

FORMER SOVIET UNION

1. General Trends

Continuing a trend that has emerged in recent years, former Soviet Union (FSU) countries used antisemitic motifs to advance internal political and social goals this year as well. Against the backdrop of political and social crises in several countries in the region, it has become common practice to employ antisemitism as a propaganda-theoretical issue. Additionally, Jews were accused of global domination and causing negative phenomena from ancient times to the present day. Added to this were antisemitic allegations which penetrated the core of general public discourse which often raised issues of Jewish 'backstabbing' and dual loyalty.

As in recent years, in 2020 Ukraine continued to lead in terms of the variety and scope of incidents, but there was also a real willingness on the part of the authorities to deal with them and contain them. Other countries, such as Russia, Belarus, Armenia, and Latvia recorded a significant change in the nature of the manifestations of antisemitism, and in some cases, also in their scope.

Unlike 2019, in 2020, the political, social, and economic crises that befell the region, especially in the second half of the year, led to a practical translation of antisemitic propaganda that became widespread in the region. The anti-Jewish rhetoric of hating Jews and shaping their image as the ultimate enemy continued, intensified, and manifested itself as an increase in the scale of violent incidents.

The trend of distorting the memory of the Holocaust and the events of World War II continues to arouse concern. The growing use of manipulations and distortions in the memory of World War II and the events that preceded it, not only in glorifying Nazi collaborators and those who murdered Jews, but also in trying to rewrite history by blaming Jews for their fate in the Holocaust and reviving antisemitic myths. Special attention should be paid to the process of Holocaust trivialization and its exploitation in an attempt to glorify national/local suffering in a way that appropriates the Holocaust and disconnect it from the Jews.

The spread of the coronavirus and the changes to daily life that accompanied it did not lead to an outbreak of antisemitism or accusations that Jews are responsible for Covid-19 and its consequences in former Soviet Union countries.

This is despite some events that might have encouraged this trend, such as the attempts of Breslav's followers to reach Uman ahead of the "Terrible Days" against the background of the local population's fear of tourists from around the world coming to the city.

Alongside classic antisemitic sources, in recent years the internet in general and social networks in particular have become one of the main focal points for the dissemination of antisemitic content by stakeholders both public and political.

Despite the increase in the volume and severity of the incidents, there has been no change for the better in the field of combating the phenomenon. Authorities and law enforcement agencies prefer to ignore, or at most classify manifestations of antisemitism as "acts of bullying" without any connection to the ethnic-religious aspect, along with providing a non-deterrent lenient punishment.

2. Coronavirus-Related Antisemitism in the FSU

As mentioned, in former Soviet Union countries there was no increase in incidents due to the coronavirus. However, in countries such as Russia and Ukraine during the first and second wave of infections, which took place respectively during Spring and Summer, the crisis was used to leverage antisemitic propaganda in internal political and social struggles directed at Jews. In some cases, it was original local content which accused the Jews of exploiting the situation to advance their interests. Yet for the most part, this is a widespread use of antisemitic incitement discourse originating in the West, which failed to gain a significant grip on the general public.

YouTube videos claiming that the Jews are responsible for spreading or inventing the coronavirus have gained popularity since March, when a number of "professional antisemites" tried to garner public attention to the issue. Within a few months, the vast majority of such videos were deleted from the web, and legal sanctions began to haunt video publishers. Eccentric figures like Abbot Romanov became famous during this short period of time, in which his videos blaming the coronavirus on Jews and state authorities flourished. After several months, the church fired him and his authority was revoked along with the popularity of the videos he posted.

The Corona period and the transition to online community activity also summoned a new type of antisemitic harassment: Zoombombing; an outbreak of intruding into community video chats with the aim of disrupting them, shouting insults, cursing, and sometimes even using Holocaust denial or extremist Islam-style threats. It was not always clear who was behind these acts but basic precautions have been taken which have reduced the phenomenon considerably.

3. Breakdown by FSU Countries

3.1 Russia

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, there has been no institutional antisemitism in Russia and no restrictions on the integration of Jews into local society. Many and varied Jewish organizations operate without interruption and are an integral part of the public landscape in the country. Senior figures in Russia at the highest levels are clearly speaking out against the phenomenon of racism in general and antisemitism in particular.

However, as in previous years, in 2020 the Jews continued to be accused of dual loyalty on the one hand, and world domination on the other. Moreover, these accusations were made not only by nationalist fringe activists, but also by official state sources. One can often hear, see, or read claims

about the existence of the "international Jewish lobby" that rules the world and the inaccurate claim of Jewish involvement in both historical events and contemporary reality; such as the overthrow of the tsarist regime, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the continuing damage to Russia today. Any politician or public figure who does not identify as an ethnic Russian is immediately suspected of having Jewish roots. This was the case, for example, when Mikhail Mishustin was appointed Prime Minister in January. Even ahead of the referendum on changes to the constitution that took place in June-July, accusations were made about the involvement of local and international Jewish elements in disrupting the move. On the other hand, an attempt was also made to tarnish the opposition, and in particular its leader Alexei Navalny, with antisemitic positions. In a TV program hosted by Vladimir Soloviev, who is a senior media figure of Jewish descent that is close to the authorities, he accused intellectuals of Jewish descent of sympathizing with Navalny who allegedly holds antisemitic and homophobic views.

The process of glorifying the past and the search for historical heroes has more than once led to the rise of controversial figures, who have stood out for having extremist antisemitic positions. During 2020 there is talk of commemorating Ivan Shcheglovitov, the Minister of Justice during the reign of Tsar Nicholas II, who was one of the initiators of the Beilis trial and responsible for the advancement of institutionalized antisemitic policies during the last decade of the Russian Empire in the early 20th century. This was also joined by attempts in a number of regional cities in Russia to purify the name of an antisemitic "Black Hundred" movement from the early 20th century, and to honor the memory of some public antisemitic figures from that period. The reason for honoring these figures is not due to their antisemitic actions or beliefs, but is rather an attempt to rebuild national memory through the glorification of common non-Soviet local heroes; even if they happen to have been antisemites as well. However, in practice, it's an attempt to whitewash institutional antisemitism that existed in early 20th century Russia. One of the most notable incidents during 2020 was (and still is), as mentioned above, an affair surrounding former monk Sergei Romanov, who is considered the spiritual father of the nationalist-extremist current, who sees the figure of the last Russian Tsar, Nicholas II, as martyred by the Jews. Romanov took advantage of the restrictions imposed following the spread of the coronavirus earlier this year to attack the official and ecclesiastical establishment, and accused it of "surrendering to the Jews."

The process of visualization of antisemitic myths also continues in the media and mass entertainment: the Jew is portrayed as greedy, cowardly, and unfaithful to the Russian people. Thus, in preparation for the events of the 75th anniversary of the victory over the Nazis, a series called "Strong Armor" was broadcast with a negative character of a Jewish officer, embodying all the negative traits and myths created during World War II: the desire to escape battle, the desire to win at the expense of unit members, or to join the battle in order to advance personal goals. The name of the officer, Lev Bronstein, is also identical to the real name of Lev Trotsky, one of the leaders of the Bolshevik revolution; hinting at who the negative character really portrays. Moreover, state television continues to encourage the myth that Jews were victims who went like sheep to the slaughter while unwilling to thank rescuers from the Red Army. On June 26th, on the "60 Minutes" program on the state channel *Russia 1*, members of the opposition, most of them of Jewish descent,

were accused of infidelity to the Russia which saved their ancestors from the Nazi kilns. These positions come against the background of the negation of the uniqueness of the Holocaust and its transformation in the general public discourse into a secondary event during the " Great Patriotic War " period. Thus, the Russian Jewish Congress (RJC), which has been working for many years to commemorate the memory of the Holocaust, is often accused of "spreading lies about the Holocaust, ignoring the suffering of other peoples, and trying to blackmail the Russian people financially and emotionally." Aside from this, the RJC is also accused of facilitating "the diminishment of the suffering experienced by citizens of the Soviet Union for the benefit of the Jews."

The distortion of history around World War II also reaches the education system and allows antisemitic fabrications to be distributed which portray Jews not only as collaborators with the Nazis but also as a group which undermined Russia. In September 2020, towards the start of the school year in St. Petersburg, textbooks based on Holocaust deniers' writings were distributed and included an excerpt by well-known Holocaust denier Yirii Mukhin. The excerpt claimed Jews tried to undermine the military power of the Soviet Union and worked to strengthen the Nazi war machine.

Following the trial dubbed "Russia's first trial against a Holocaust denier," Roman Yoshkov was acquitted last year when the justice system agreed to accept a compensation claim from him of six million rubles, which was defiantly worded, "against six million lies." Although the court eventually ruled in his favor and charged him only 50,000 rubles, the director of the prosecutor's office was forced to apologize to him for the "injustice" done to him, thus effectively giving a legal seal to statements denying the truths of the Holocaust.

During the year, several Jewish communities were under threat. In a notable case, there was an attempt to assassinate the head of the Jewish community of Chabad in Krasnodar in September by a group of Soviet conservatives who had already harassed the local community in 2019. Law enforcement acted accurately and managed to thwart the plot ahead of time.

Aside from all this, it is worth noting the continuing positive trend of the Russian law enforcement system in the fight against the language of hatred on social networks, and in particular the largest and most popular social network in the country, VKontakte. However, it is still mostly anti-individual activity, which also amounts to low fines or suspended sentences. On the other hand, entire sites and pages calling for harm to Jews and distributing extreme antisemitic content, including Holocaust denial, continue to operate unhindered.

3.2 Ukraine

The Ukrainian government is more attentive than ever to the issue of antisemitism, and the heads of state and government ministers are consistently and decisively condemning the phenomenon. However, during 2020 there was an increase in the number of violent incidents and explicit threats to physically harm Jews. Attacks against the Jewish community in Vinnytsia in February, attacks on synagogues in Kherson in April, in Mariupol in July, in Kolomyia in December, and attacks on pilgrims

to Uman in October. This, along with the continued desecration of Jewish sites, such as in Kryvyi Rih or Ostrog in January, near the Cherkasy in February, in Ivano-Frankivsk in June, in Melitopol in October and November, and more. The discourse raging on social media against public displaying of menorahs also led to several acts of vandalism and causing damage to the menorahs that were placed in various places throughout the country during the Hanukkah holidays in December. The fact that a politician of Jewish descent is at the head of the state has in recent years led to an increase in impersonal discourse among extremist groups which includes accusations against Jews of taking over the state and its assets, the claim that in the future Jews will buy parts of Ukraine for world-Jewish or Russian control. Aside from this, nationalist forces see this as a "warning sign" against the election of politicians who are not ethnic Ukrainians. This trend intensified in the run-up to the local elections held on October 25th.

The glorification of national heroes and the rewriting of the historical narrative in Ukraine are part of a process designed not only to strengthen the national-local ethos, but also to create a sharp and clear distinction between the Ukrainian people and the Russian people. From this, officials and the public refuse to recognize the role of those "heroes" in the extermination of the minority population in general and the Jews in particular. In this spirit, state-sponsored events are held in Kyiv and elsewhere to mark "acts of heroism."

Moreover, in order to undermine the credibility of the criticism leveled at them, some elements in Ukraine prefer to respond to critics by attacking them in return; sometimes by mobilizing historical revisionism of the Holocaust and presenting the Jews as Nazi servants or collaborators. This move should, in the opinion of its predecessors, enable the confrontation with the dichotomy of self-presentation as a victim of the Russian-German double occupation on the one hand, and as collaborators with the Nazis on the other.

This was the case during the months of April and May, when several public activists and businessmen rejected accusations in the Ukrainian media about collaborating with the Nazis and claimed that hundreds of thousands of Jews allegedly served in the Wehrmacht and SS units.

Moreover, the criticism directed at the authorities in Ukraine is received by the nationalist circles in the country in a very negative way and receives severe antisemitic reactions. This was the case, for example, in January, when some political activists responded to a letter of protest sent by Israeli and Polish ambassadors regarding the glorification of the murderers of Poles and Jews, or following a decision by the Yad Vashem institution in February, which refused to recognize the head of the Greek Catholic Church, Andrey Sheptytsky, as 'Righteous Among the Nations'. During 2020, several investigations were reported under Section 161 of the Criminal Code (an act of hatred on ethnic grounds), a move that was not common in previous years. However, and despite statements about the fight against antisemitism, law enforcement often refrained from investigating incidents of hate in general, and in particular not treating them as incidents inspired by ethnic or religious beliefs, but only as acts of bullying or hooliganism. This happened, for example, after a couple attacks against Jewish tourists in Uman; the first against a Jewish couple and then against two ultra-Orthodox

tourists in October. Sometimes, only giving public opinion to the authorities' position motivates them to open an investigation and prosecute, as happened, for example, following the refusal to open a criminal investigation into spray-painting abusive graffiti "Death to Jews" in Mariupol in March, due to "failure to find grounds for investigation." Only after the case was exposed by the United Jewish Community of Ukraine did the authorities agree to open an investigation. Moreover, the Kyiv police refused to investigate the distribution of antisemitic literature on the very same claim: "No sufficient reason was found to open the investigation." Social networks, especially Facebook and telegram channels, have also become a source of hate speech, especially around local elections or Hanukkah events, without the authorities giving their opinion on the phenomenon.

Antisemitism and the Coronavirus Pandemic in Ukraine

Against the background of the fear of the epidemic spreading, public controversy arose over reducing the number of pilgrims to Uman and preventing them from arriving in the shadow of the coronavirus. The closure of the space for the entry of foreign nationals and the rapid and effective handling of illegal attempts by pilgrims to reach Uman calmed the local population and prevented clashes between it and the pilgrims amid fears of a virus outbreak in the city following the arrival of foreign nationals. This concern had objective motives, which could not be categorically classified as antisemitic motives. In this context it is worth noting the clear and unequivocal position of the Ukrainian authorities, who have worked resolutely to minimize the outbreak of antisemitic hate speech around the subject of an artist and have even managed to keep it within the boundaries of conventional criticism.

3.3 Belarus

The public protest against the results of the presidential election that took place in August became the largest and longest-lasting protest in the history of the country and led to unprecedented violence. During a violent dispersal of protesters, a number of Israeli Jews and citizens were also arrested, one of whom, Alexander Fruman, even reported verbal antisemitic violence against him when police learned he was an Israeli citizen.

Normally, Belarusians usually refrain from addressing public Jewish issues, whether perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust or part of the Jewish national history, as happened, for example, during a speech by President Alexander Lukashenko on Victory in Europe (9 May), which did not mention the Jews alongside remaining Victims of Nazism, or in November, when the bones of one of Belarus's national writers, Zmitrok Biadula (Shmuel-Nokhem Plaunik) were reburied in a full religious-Christian ceremony, while almost completely ignoring the fact that he is a Jew who carefully preserved his roots and national heritage. On the other hand, since the end of August 2020, there has been widespread use of the Jewish issue around protests on both sides.

In some cases it is possible to point to an attempt to tarnish the opposition by taking antisemitic positions through clear provocations, as was done in early September when some Jewish

communities received threatening letters sent, ostensibly, from the opposition, whose authors are unfamiliar with Belarusian internal life.

The same is true of a series of antisemitic graffiti which appeared in various places in Minsk during November and December. At the same time, the authorities began to critically hint at Jewish leadership of the protests through their campaigners, such as Grigorii Azarionok (CTV channel) or Andrei Mukovozchik ("Belarus Today" newspaper), attributing to the demonstrators traits they identified with the Jews, or emphasizing the origins of some critics of the regime.

On the other hand, opposition leaders have consciously chosen to ignore the antisemitic remarks made by Nina Biginskaia, who is considered the figure most identified with the protests. Moreover, Nina's remarks were censored and were not included in reports of her activities that circulated on social media. Another phenomenon recorded this year is a hate speech incorporated into public criticism based on ethnic ties against Jews in response to the measures in which they were involved. Thus, many of the reactions to the decision of Mikhail Finberg, the principal conductor of the Belarus National Orchestra, to hold a concert at the National Theater (all of whose employees resigned in light of sympathy with the protests), addressed his negative traits in the context of his Jewish origins. This also happened after the submission of the charter by the new Israeli ambassador to the ruler of the state. It should be noted that while similar acts by non-Jewish states or individuals have received partial public criticism, they have never been "ethnic-religious."

Another issue of real concern is the process of trivializing the memory of the Holocaust, which is reflected in the widespread use of symbols related to it that are compared to what is happening in Belarus. While in the first phase of the protests, the Jewish aspect was absent from these comparisons, during November the actual comparisons between the situation of the Jews and the situation of the Belarusians multiplied.

These acts seem puzzling in light of the Belarusian public's consistent and ongoing disregard for Holocaust issues and its commemoration over the past three decades. Moreover, in October, a clear provocation attempt was made in the city of Slutsk by opposition elements who tried to hold a ceremony for laying foreigners, ostensibly, for a monument in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. This is in contrast to the authorities' requirement to register the event legally. The vast majority of participants did not hide their desire to take advantage of the incident to provoke the police, with overt statements that "they have never participated in Holocaust ceremonies" before. Later these statements have been systematically deleted from social networks. As expected, the incident was forcibly dispersed by the police. Some of its participants were arrested and fined which allowed the opposition to claim the "distinctly antisemitic nature of the regime."

It should be recalled that other incidents, and in particular the main incident in Minsk, which were reported to the authorities under all the rules, took place without any interruption by the law enforcement agencies. Another record in the abuse of the Holocaust memory and its symbols

occurred on December 5th when a Christian religious hymn written by a Nazi collaborator, Natalia Arsenyeva in 1943, was sung at the memorial site for Holocaust victims in Minsk, "Yama" (The Pit).

3.4 Latvia

In Latvia, activists of the Russian-speaking community were one of the main factors behind the spread of antisemitic views during 2020. These activists, who claim to present themselves as fighters against Nazism and who often compare their situation to the situation of Holocaust victims, have often chosen to use clear antisemitic hate speech in reference to the Jewish origin of President Egils Levits and his actions.

4. The Nagorno-Karabakh Region

The war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh region has led to a worrying rise in the level of antisemitism on the part of the Armenians, which has come amid criticism of political cooperation and security trade between Israel and Azerbaijan. Political criticism was soon replaced by attacks on ethnic-religious backgrounds and accusations against Jews of alleged historical and contemporary crimes against the Armenian people. The war in Nagorno-Karabakh, led, in extreme cases, to the only example from the past year to New Antisemitism. Reports that Israel supplies weapons to the Azeri army provoked outrage among the Armenian population and in some of the demonstrations held in Armenia, antisemitic slogans were chanted. The President of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Prime Minister of Armenia have accused Israel of supporting the Armenian Genocide.

5. Insights

Against the background of the corona crisis and closures, 2020 is no ordinary year. Although it is not statistically possible to normalize the effect of closures, it seems that in general there were fewer incidents in the area, but overall, there was some increase in physical and violent incidents, as well as incidents against Jewish institutions such as synagogues and cemeteries. Contrary to expectations and some publications, the coronavirus did not actually raise the level of physical or virtual antisemitism in the virtual space. However, the negative economic consequences of the epidemic could lead to such an increase. In general, the nationalist discourse in the Russian-speaking space turns less of a spotlight on the Jewish question and is more preoccupied with intra-national problems and "memory wars." New Antisemitism is not a significant factor in the discourse, but the media do know how to raise the bar of criticism towards Israel which is at times on the verge of antisemitism when events occur abroad and security relations between Israel and one of the region's countries. The subject of the Holocaust, and in some cases the attempt to diminish its meaning and dimensions, continues to be an important issue in the former Soviet Union space, but it is important to note that it exists for the most part as part of the general discussion of World War II and historical narratives.

6. Main Antisemitic Incidents in 2020

February - Vinnitsa, Ukraine: A man burst into a synagogue and attacked a Jew who was staying in the building, shouting insults at Jews. Local police lingered and arrived only about 25 minutes after the incident began. The assailant, who was drunk at the time of the attack, was arrested.

April - Starodub in the Bryansk Province, Russia: A plan of raising a monument in a memory of Ivan Shcheglovitov was accepted. The plan was submitted by some local high school students. Scheglovitov was born in the area and worked as a minister of justice in the Russian empire. He was also one of the initiators of the "Beilis Trail" in 1911. The initiator of raising the monument is the prosecutor of Bryansk area, Alexander Witovich.³⁴³

April - Arkhangelsk, Russia: A synagogue was set on fire. A man climbed over a fence of the local Jewish center and started a fire by lighting a few tires. The building was damaged and this is the third attempt in recent years to vandalize the local Jewish center (previous ones took place in 2015 and 2016). A suspect was arrested in June.

April - Russia: An antisemitic sermon was circulated online. A priest named Sergei Romanov, who is considered to be close to some Russian parliament members, delivered an antisemitic sermon, in which he accused the Jews of killing Russian patriarch Alexei the Second, spreading the Coronavirus, and the closing of churches. In his speech he suggested Jews be exiled. In response, the official Church forbade him to deliver sermons.

April - Kherson, Ukraine: A Molotov cocktail was thrown at a synagogue. The building was lightly damaged and in May, two suspects were arrested for setting fire to the synagogue. According to testimony, the two young men, aged 18 and 19, met through messenger chat services (the platform has yet to be confirmed, but it was likely WhatsApp, Telegram, or Viber) and planned to burn down a synagogue on Hitler's birthday.

May - Moscow, Russia: Arrest made against suspect accused of spreading antisemitic coronavirus conspiracies. The suspect, who is a 54-year-old man, is accused of creating and disseminating a video containing antisemitic conspiracy theories accusing Jews of "distributing the Coronavirus." The video, entitled "Virus like Matzah," was posted on VK.

June - Lithuania, Vilnius: Two statues of famous Jews were vandalized. Statues of "the Vilna Gaon" and Dr. Zemach Shabad were vandalized with bright paint. The mayor of Vilna condemned the incident. The incident happened a day after the Lithuanian writer, Ruta Vangaite, presented her new book in the city's synagogue. The book, like her previous ones, issues a polemic regarding the role of Lithuanian people in the extermination of Jews during the Holocaust.

July - St. Petersburg, Russia: 30 gravestones were smashed at the Jewish cemetery located in the Nevsky District of the city. The headstones were destroyed at some point between July 26th to July 28th by unidentified vandals while the local guard was off duty.

July - Russia: A Khazan-man was arrested for publishing antisemitic and racist posts on social media. The man, who is 38-years-old, was arrested on June 29th and sentenced to a five day administrative arrest for antisemitic and racist posts shared on unnamed social media platforms.

³⁴³ <https://cutt.ly/Kh1VO4e>.

July - Mariupol, Ukraine: Man wielding an axe attempts to carry out synagogue attack. On July 28th, a young man carrying an axe tried to enter a synagogue after morning prayers. He was stopped by a local guard who fought him and prevented him from entering the building. During the fight, the guard sustained minor injuries. In addition, while fleeing, the attacker managed to throw packages and cans with feces, sand, and an unknown substance towards the synagogue. The attacker was arrested after several days. The Jewish community in the city criticized the way the investigation was conducted because the police defined the incident as an "act of bullying" and not a "hate crime" as demanded by the Jewish community in the city.

August - Perm, Russia: Man sentenced to jail for one year for antisemitic remarks on VK. The 51-year-old was sentenced for making antisemitic remarks while replying to content on VK. The remarks included blunt expressions against Jews, Caucasians, and Asians.

August - Ternopil, Ukraine: Deputy of the Ternopil Regional Council publicly performed antisemitic song. Bohdan Yatskovskyi, who is a member of Oleh Lyashko's radical party, performed the song "Jews Before Hanging" during a public concert. According to Yatskovskyi, the song "is folklore, folk art."

August - Vilnius, Lithuania: Statue of the 'Vilna Gaon' vandalized for the second time in the last two months. On August 2nd, an unidentified person poured unspecified liquid on the statue. A similar instance took place in June.

August - Minsk, Belarus: Israeli citizens arrested during anti-government riots and at least one reported antisemitic abuse. One of the Israelis who were arrested in Minsk claimed that severe violence was used against him and that the police made antisemitic remarks once they learned that he was an Israeli citizen.

September - St. Petersburg, Russia: Antisemitic quotes in teacher instruction booklets on lessons about World War II. The pamphlets were distributed to teachers at the beginning of the school year in a number of elementary schools in the Viborg area of St. Petersburg. The booklet contains quotes from the books of antisemitic author Yuri Mukhin, who accuses Western countries of subversion against the USSR on the eve of the war. The booklet includes the following paragraph: "Polish Jews in Auschwitz produced explosives, synthetic gasoline, and rubber to kill Soviet civilians..."

September - Moscow, Russia: Attempted break-in at synagogue during Rosh Hashanah. On September 20th during Rosh Hashanah, a resident of the area came to the door of the Synagogue and Jewish Community Center and attempted to break in while shouting antisemitic slogans. After failing to enter, the man damaged the building and tore the license plates from the community Rabbi's vehicle. The attacker was arrested.

September - Krasnodar, Russia: Two members of nationalist group sought to assassinate the head of the Jewish community. The detainees, a man and a woman, are members of the Communist-Nationalist Movement 'Citizens of the Soviet Union.' The pair were looking to hire an assassin to commit the murder. Local police discovered their plot and arrested them.

September - Uman, Ukraine: A man was arrested after he circulated on social media calls of physical harm to Jews.

September - Belarus: The Jewish communities received threatening letters. The first letter was received on September 2nd in Gomel and after a few days, a letter with the same content arrived to

the Jewish community in Grodno. The letter included the following text: “Jews-supporters of Lukashenko. Leave our land. Belarus for Belarusian, Long live Belarus! Belarus without Jews and Lukashenko.” It is very likely that this is a provocation by pro-government elements in Belarus.

October - Moscow, Russia: Two citizens prosecuted for racist and antisemitic social media posts. A Moscow resident and a minor resident of Sevastopol have posted xenophobic and antisemitic content on the social network VK. The 17-year-old minor was sentenced to one year probation, while the trial of the 42-year-old Moscow resident is still ongoing. This is not the first time the latter has been charged with publishing antisemitic content.

October - Uman, Ukraine: Jews attacked in two different occasions. On October 7th, a young man harassed and robbed a couple of elderly Breslav followers from London in broad daylight while making antisemitic remarks towards them. The second incident took place on the night of October 18th when two young Breslav followers were attacked in a dark alley near Rabbi Nachman's grave by three locals. One of the young men was hit in the face by a knife and needed medical attention. The Jewish community in Ukraine considers the two attacks antisemitically motivated, while the local police, which arrested the attackers in both cases, sees the incidents as an "act of bullying" without a nationalist element.

October - Vinnitsa, Ukraine: Antisemitic remarks were made by candidate for city council. Yelena Zutzinskaya, who is running for the municipal proposal on behalf of the “Servants of the People” party, posted a video on her Instagram page containing the following quote: “How the hell [are we supposed] to deal with this f**king eternal Judaism?” After the video was released, Yelena claimed that her words were edited and deliberately distorted.

November - Moscow, Russia: Court fines man for posting two antisemitic coronavirus conspiracy videos on YouTube. The fine, amounting to 400,000 rubles, was imposed on a 54-year-old. In March, he released two videos which claimed that Covid-19 was a Jewish disease and that Jews used it to trade in human organs.

November - Chisinau, Moldova: Ancient Jewish cemetery vandalized three times within a few days. During the attacks, 42 tombstones were destroyed and 30 swastikas and pagan symbols were spray-painted on walls and tombstones in the cemetery. The Jewish community in the city warned twice about what was happening, but the local authorities didn’t respond in time. An investigation has been opened.

December - Ukraine: A series of vandalistic attacks against menorahs placed in squares in state cities. At least five menorahs were vandalized in various ways.

[Violent Incidents in Uman](#)

During the year there were a number of incidents of violence against Jews which took place in Uman, Ukraine. There were a number of attacks on Jews who came to the city ahead of Rosh Hashanah but these few attacks indicate what could have happened if the number of Jewish pilgrims was not reduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to fears that Orthodox religious pilgrim would cause an outbreak of coronavirus in Uman, Ukraine closed their borders to foreign nationals. This calmed the local population and likely prevented clashes between them and Orthodox pilgrims. This concern had objective motives, which could not be classified as antisemitic motives. The number of incidents

of violence in the city against Jews, who nevertheless managed to enter the city, echoed this fear, but as stated, their low numbers showed the success of the authorities in preventing higher friction that could resonate years ahead and affect local community and pilgrimage relations.

THE MUSLIM WORLD

1. General Trends

The most prominent trends in the Muslim World were:

- A lot of discourse on social media with occasional antisemitic undertones regarding the normalization of ties with Israel.
- The expression of Classic and New Antisemitism regarding regional conflicts. Particularly the Shiite-Sunni conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the struggle between the Turkey-Qatar-Muslim Brothers axis and governments throughout the Arab world.
- Antisemitic discourse following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The emergence of a separatist Islamic discourse following the re-publication of the prophet Muhammed's cartoons in France. The latter links events in Western Europe with normalization and poses Muslims against Jews and Christians.

2. Antisemitic Reactions to Normalization with Israel

In August 2020, Israel and the UAE announced a peace treaty which would normalize ties between the two countries. Later, two more Arab countries joined: Bahrain and Sudan. This development hastened an already existing discourse in the Arab world on normalization of relations with Israel (in Arabic *Tatbi*). In some cases, the opponents employed antisemitic ideas. In Arab discourse, the terms "Israelis" and "Jews" (*Yahud*) are often interchangeable and the term "Jew" was frequently used in place of "Israelis." Therefore, many of the opponents expressed opposition to relations with "Jews," while actually meaning Israelis. Some used Islamic justifications to their opposition. In an interview with the Hamas-affiliated *Al Aqsa* TV channel on October 6th, 'Abd al-Hayy Yusuf, deputy chairman of the International Union of Islamic Scholars in Sudan, criticized those who use Islamic motives and stories from the life of Muhammad to justify normalization. Islam orders Muslims to be hostile to the Jews, he claimed.³⁴⁴

Others were using antisemitic notions taken from classic Western antisemitism. Thus, the former Jordanian minister of health, Dr. Mamduh al-'Abadi, interviewed by the pro-Hezbollah *Al Mayadeen* TV channel on September 15th, said that "Jews make ties with the Gulf countries solely for the purpose of exploiting their funds," and added "the Jews are Shylocks."³⁴⁵ Other speakers used the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to 'prove' the claim that relations between Israel and the Gulf states is part of a Jewish-Israeli-Zionist conspiracy to control the states of the region. On September 22nd, Jaber al Mari published an antisemitic article in the Qatari daily *Al Sharq* in which he claimed that the "Zionist entity" exploits internal conflicts in the Arab world to exhaust Arab countries and control them.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ <https://bit.ly/2McE9aD>.

³⁴⁵ <https://bit.ly/3qVcudd>.

³⁴⁶ <https://bit.ly/3cimEQE>.

This debate was particularly noted in countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Gulf countries, Oman, Egypt, and Sudan, whose politicians were involved in normalizing ties with Israel either practically or on social media. Among the Palestinians, the main victims of normalization, there was a multiplicity of voices criticizing the move which were given official backing from both the PA and the Hamas leadership in Gaza and abroad. Nevertheless, official speakers in general refrained from exceeding the limits of legitimate talk and use antisemitic language.

3. Antisemitism in Regional Conflicts

In various regional conflicts, all sides expressed antisemitic notions such as referring to their adversaries as “Jewish,” “Zionist,” or the “one who became a Zionist” (*Mutasahyin*). These terms were employed against the Saudi heir, Muhammad bin Salman, the ruler of the Emirates, Muhammad bin Zayid, the Qatari royal family, and even against the leadership of Iran by their adversaries in the Arab world.

This year the emerging alliance between Turkey, Qatar, and the Muslim Brotherhood was increasingly involved in the propagation of antisemitic messages, mainly because of Turkey’s prominent role in this axis. In general, the cooperation took the form of giving platforms to religious scholars close to the Muslim Brotherhood who spread antisemitic content and viewpoints in Turkish and Qatari media (except *Al Jazeera*).³⁴⁷

The slogan of the Houthi movement in Yemen, a Shiite branch supported by Iran, continued to be “Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse on the Jews, and victory to Islam!” (الموت لأمريكا، الموت لإسرائيل، اللعنة على اليهود والنصر للإسلام). In the ongoing conflict between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, both sides expressed antisemitic views. On the Shiite side, there were no outstanding antisemitic declarations this year, probably due to the lack of Israeli airstrikes on Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria as opposed to 2019. On September 1st, as part of harsh condemnation of the peace agreement between Israel and the UAE, Iran’s spiritual leader, Ali Khamenei, drew attention to the Jewish origins of Jared Kushner, President Trump’s son-in-law who serves as special envoy.³⁴⁸

4. Coronavirus-Related Antisemitism in the Muslim World

The emergence of Covid-19 in the Middle East represents a new phenomenon in the antisemitic discourse in Arabic. During the first phase, the virus was associated with Israel and the Jews; who were accused of its emergence and spread. Israel was accused of developing a vaccine which it does not share and of “collecting samples” from the Arab world for the development. On the other hand, users debated whether the “Israeli vaccine” should be used at all. The prominent personality accusing Israel was Iran’s spiritual leader Ali Khamenei.

³⁴⁷ <https://bit.ly/36jFC5M>.

³⁴⁸ <https://bit.ly/2KVF6Ud>.

In the West Bank, a video showing an Israeli soldier spitting on Palestinian vehicles circulated on social media with claims that this is how Israel spreads the virus in the territories. In March, Muhammad Ashtiya, Prime Minister of the PA, also accused Israel of spreading the virus. After discovering cases of contamination, the pandemic was used by the PA to curb Palestinian work in Israel and the settlements. Despite this, the PA cooperated successfully with Israel in combatting the coronavirus in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Palestinian territories are the only region in the Middle East where Jews and Arabs intermingle, thus tension was expected. The marginal damage so far and restrictions imposed by the PA have prevented the rise in coronavirus related antisemitism. Some Palestinians compared occupation and the “Zionist entity” to the virus. Dr Alaa al-Lagta, a cartoonist from Gaza, published a cartoon combining the Star of David and the virus. A hashtag campaign called “#Covid48” was launched in the Palestinian territories and has so far amassed tens of thousands of followers. Iran also launched a hashtag with a similar name.³⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the pandemic did not generate significant antisemitic discourse in the Arab world. Aside from Jews being accused of its propagation, Americans, Chinese and other groups were blamed for the virus as well.

5. Emergence of a Separatist-Isolationist Islamic Discourse

Following Events in France

In recent months, Islamic discourse on social media has included a number of separatist or isolationist motives defining views on the role of Muslims and their position with regard to Christianity and Judaism. It started as a reaction to the wave of Islamic violence in France following the debate over their integration in French society.

The first kind of arguments complained against the allegedly discriminatory treatment of Islam in the West, and particularly in France, and compared it to antisemitism and Holocaust denial. Islamic speakers made the claim that whereas antisemitism and Holocaust denial in France are considered criminal offenses, defamation of the sacred values of Islam is considered “freedom of expression.” (For more on this subject in the French context, see chapter on France in this report.) These arguments were used by leaders in the Arab and Islamic world. Iran’s spiritual leader, Ali Khamenei, and Hezbollah’s leader, Hasan Nasrallah, protested that in France Holocaust denial is an offense whereas defaming Islam is “freedom of expression.” A slightly different line was expressed by two Sunni leaders. Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Pakistani PM Imran Khan, claimed that Europe should fight against Islamophobia as it fights antisemitism. By employing the discourse of victimhood, the speakers divert attention from the violent acts at the center. It also helps to hold Europe responsible for the situation.

³⁴⁹ <https://bit.ly/3r52T3H>.

Along with this, another more radical and separatist discourse appears on social media. It appeals to Muslims in the West as well as to leaders of Arab states and their followers. It links between the debate on Islam in the West and that on normalization with Israel in the Middle East. Those in this discourse use the Quranic verse “The Jews and the Christians shall not accept thee, even you join their sects” (Quran, *Surat al Baqara*, 60) in order to preach moderate Muslims in the West and Arab leaders that there is no use in trying to imitate the Christians in the West or the Jews in the Middle East. The message is that Muslims should adhere to Islam and face all those who challenge it. This is a prevalent mode of discourse which is very likely to persist next year.³⁵⁰

6. Iran: Antisemitism as Official Policy

Iran’s spiritual leader, Ali Khamenei, was the highest-ranking contributor to Middle East antisemitism this year. As already noted, he was the first to suggest a linkage between Zionism and the coronavirus. Khamenei referred to the Jewish origins of Jared Kushner and protested against considering Holocaust denial a criminal offense in France. In response to this, Iran prepared for an international cartoon contest underlining Western “hypocrisy” which allows the defamation of a religion considering it “freedom of expression.” The organizers refrained from mentioning the Holocaust in official publications. Yet, unofficially they encourage participants to submit cartoons on this subject.³⁵¹

Khamenei’s influence rarely exceeds his native Iran, and in the Arab world is rather limited. His official twitter account in Arabic only has 141k followers, compared with the more than 3 million followers to the famous Sunni religious scholar Yusuf al Qaradawi. Antisemitic content is not posted to his account on a daily basis. Seemingly, Khamenei is aware of the distinction between Classic Antisemitism, which he avoids, and hatred of Israel, which he avidly espouses and advocates. The abstention from public provocation in the case of the cartoon contest shows that the Iranians—inspired by Khamenei—are not seeking to wave the antisemitic banner at all costs and are sensitive to implications.

Another high-ranking Iranian official, foreign minister Javad Zarif, was also caught using an antisemitic term. In an interview with Iranian YouTube channel *Arman* on December 9th, Zarif was asked how Iran views the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and whether Iran would ever recognize Israel. Zarif replied, “we do not call for throwing all the kikes [“Jahud” in Persian] to the sea, nor do we initiate a military attack against Israel.” The word “Jahud” is a pejorative term for Jews in Persian, and even Khamenei refrained from using it in his comment on Kushner. After the incident was reported on by MEMRI, Zarif referred to the publication of his comments in a

³⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/DrHAKEM/status/1320942880731631617>.
<https://twitter.com/JaberDayi/status/1320797735562391557>.
https://twitter.com/naser_jobran/status/1321851553536507906.

³⁵¹ <https://www.adl.org/blog/tehran-launches-its-third-holocaust-denial-cartoon-contest>.

December 16th tweet where he condemned both the publication and the accusation of antisemitism. He clarified that his comments were meant to refute the allegations that Iran wants to throw the Jews to the sea and therefore used the term.³⁵²

Official antisemitism in Iran mainly includes calls for the extermination of Israel, Holocaust denial, comparing Israel and Zionism to the coronavirus, and criticism on the different approach in the West to antisemitism and Islamophobia. Iranians are aware of the problems associated with anti-Jewish expressions, and as a substitute, attack Israel and Zionism instead. Pronouncements such as those by Khamenei and Zarif show the antisemitism simmering below the surface of official rhetoric.³⁵³

7. Bahrain Backs IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism

On October 23rd, Bahrain and the American administration, represented by Elan Carr (former President Trump's special envoy to combat antisemitism), signed a memorandum in Washington, D.C. which stated that the Gulf state is committed to combat antisemitism. The memorandum states that the Jewish and the Arab peoples have long been victims of hatred. Bahrain backed the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, which clearly includes combatting the delegitimization of Israel.³⁵⁴ In signing, Bahrain became the first Arab country to back the IHRA definition and the third Muslim-majority country to do so after Albania and Kosovo.

8. Antisemitic Statements by Hamas and PA Personalities

A number of antisemitic utterances by speakers of the PA and Hamas were registered this year, both in the Palestinian territories and in the diaspora. These views are influenced by core reasons, such as the continuation of the Palestinian national struggle as well as by periodical aspects like coronavirus, normalization (which further marginalizes the Palestinians), and the state of relations between Israel and the PA or Hamas. Speakers associated with Hamas expressed classic antisemitic views, exposing antisemitic sentiments which still exists in the movement despite changing the overtly antisemitic Hamas covenant in 2017. For example, Mustafa al-Lidawi, former Hamas representative in Syria and Lebanon, was interviewed on the Iranian channel *Al Alam*, and claimed that European Jews were using the blood of non-Jewish children to bake matzah for Passover. He also said that Israelis no longer practice this but still believe that God ordained them to use the blood of non-Jews during Passover.³⁵⁵ In Gaza, Rajaa al-Halabi, chairperson of the Hamas Women movement, stated in a rally on July 9th that the Jews are the "killers of prophets" and "traitors." She added that 'this enemy' arrives from all corners of the earth and has no place here, but this is what Allah wanted and our fate is to be god's arm that would put an end to the sons of Israel... Allah brought [the Jews] here so that Palestine would be their graveyard. The Fatah movement published

³⁵² <https://bit.ly/3aaXEbJ>.

³⁵³ https://twitter.com/ar_Khamenei.

³⁵⁴ <https://bit.ly/2KUxscH>.

³⁵⁵ <https://bit.ly/3t6G3tY>.

a video in October calling on the people of Jerusalem to liberate themselves from the Jews. In retaliation to normalization with Israel, the video urges Arab countries to unite in order to salvage Jerusalem and prepare “the graveyard for the Jews.”³⁵⁶ In an Interview with *Palestine* TV channel, Ibrahim Milhim, spokesman of the PA Council of Ministers, referred to the coronavirus crisis and accused Israel of preferring profits to saving human lives. He added that Israel only sees the interest of maintaining its production because it concerns money.³⁵⁷

9. Antisemitism in Jordan and Egypt

In Jordan and Egypt, the first two Arab countries to sign peace treaties with Israel, antisemitism is widespread. Interestingly, in Lebanon, another Arab country bordering Israel, antisemitic and anti-Israeli views were not as vibrant as in Jordan and Egypt even though talks of normalization resumed. In Egypt, hostility to Israel is a long-standing phenomenon and an important part of the national identity. In recent years another antisemitic dimension was added to the opposition to al-Sisi’s authoritarianism: the rumor that his mother was a Moroccan Jew named Maleeka. Many referred to al-Sisi as “the son of a Jewess” or “Maleeka’s son.”

Antisemitism in Jordan is Islamic, Arab nationalist, and Palestinian. It is rooted in identification with the Palestinian struggle, rejection of normalization with Israel, and a dominant Islamic discourse. The current crisis between Israel and Jordan did not have a significant effect. As in Egypt, antisemitism is part of the discourse of domestic opposition and is also directed against the regime.

10. The Central Role of Islamic Scholars in Middle Eastern Antisemitism

The most noted group propagating Arab antisemitism are Islamic scholars. Antisemitic deliberations among them do not always depend on the political situation or serve a definite purpose, and often result from reciting a certain tradition or interpreting the scriptures in public. Over this past year, Islamic scholars, especially those associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, expressed ideas of Islamic antisemitism with European classic antisemitism, such as blood libels or the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. One day after the declaration of normalization between the UAE and Israel (August 14th) , the most important organization of Muslim scholars in Sunni Islam, the Qatar based “International Union of Muslim Scholars” (IUMS), published a statement claiming that the agreement was signed as a result of an act of convincing by “the elders” in the spirit of the “protocols.”³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/1591249977800343/videos/1009564899512998>.

³⁵⁷ http://www.elahmad.com/tv/palestine_tv.php.

³⁵⁸ <https://elderofzion.blogspot.com/2020/08/international-union-of-muslim-scholars.html>.

On the opposite side, other Islamic scholars promoted anti-hatred speech, encouraging moderation and inter-faith dialogue. The most prominent is Muhammad al-‘Issa, former Saudi minister of justice, who organized a delegation of Islamic scholars to visit Auschwitz. He was recently nominated as member of “The Shura Council,” the supreme religious authority in Saudi Arabia.

11. Jewish Communities Past and Present and the Discourse About the Jews

On August 8th, a Jewish family from Yemen was reunited with members of the family who live in London. The emotional event took place in the UAE, who was involved in the operation. Following that, the Arab media focused on the tiny Jewish community who still lives in war-torn Yemen. Most of the community lives under the control of the pro-Iranian and overtly antisemitic Houthi movement.

The Arab press published items of unknown reliability about an alleged “ethnic cleansing” of Jews perpetrated by the Houthis and regarding a “plan” by the emirates to help the remaining Jews leave the country. So far there are no further developments in this subject. It is only known that one Yemenite Jew was detained by the Houthis and accused of spying for Israel.

With the exception of Yemen, Morocco, and Tunisia, there are no other Jewish communities in the rest of the Arab world. Consequently, antisemitism in the Arab world is mainly theoretical.

In stark contrast to the hate speech, there is a vibrant philosemitic talk in Arab countries over the last few years. Many claim that Arab countries lost a precious resource with the deportation of the Jews and dwell nostalgically on the common past. This is seen in Iraq, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, and even Yemen. The reactions to this speech would sometimes be drafted in antisemitic terms.

LATIN AMERICA

1. General Trends

Latin America and the Spanish-speaking regions are spread over three continents and contain a large number of countries and diverse populations. At the same time, a common historical and cultural background make it possible to identify common patterns of antisemitism in some of these areas. In areas formerly under control or influence of the Spanish throne, echoes of medieval Christian antisemitism can still be found, despite sincere efforts made by the Catholic Church to eradicate it. An example of this was when Pope Paul VI made statements in the synagogue of Rome describing Judaism as the "elder brother" of Christianity that should be respected and cherished and not fought. Another characteristic of these areas is a strong political tradition of left-wing socialism, which tends to lean towards a distinctly pro-Palestinian narrative. Together, these two factors have the most prominent influences on antisemitic discourse in the Spanish speaking regions.

Alongside these factors, one can find other factors that effect the level of antisemitism, such as the size of the Jewish community. This characteristic affects both the number of incidents (mainly physical) and the media coverage these incidents receive. In countries where there is a strong and active Jewish community in public and political life, the discourse about antisemitic incidents usually makes headlines more frequently. For example, in countries like Argentina and Brazil, where the Jewish community actively promotes the fight against antisemitism, there is more media coverage to the subject.

2. Main Propagators of Antisemitic Discourse

Antisemitism in the Spanish-speaking countries can be divided into three distinct groups in terms of the nature, frequency, and causation of antisemitic events in the past year:

- Countries where the source of antisemitic events originates in groups or individuals who operate independently in political and civic frameworks and produce a variety of incidents motivated by New and Classic Antisemitism
- Countries where the source of antisemitism is governmental or political, and
- Countries in which antisemitic attacks or incidents are rare due to low levels of antisemitism or the lack of a Jewish community.

2.1 First Group

Includes countries where the Jewish community is large and has significant political weight, such as Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. For example, in Argentina, the Jewish community constitutes about 2% of the total population and is estimated at over 200,000 people. The manifestations of antisemitism in these countries have varied this year and have included cases of vandalism, isolated assaults, diverse expressions of classical racism and the spread of a variety of conspiracy theories

surrounding the coronavirus crisis.³⁵⁹ Argentina is the country where most antisemitic incidents are reported. The Jewish community in Argentina is characterized by a significant political and social presence, which is reflected in the many media reactions by the Association of Argentine Jewish Communities (DAIA) in any antisemitic incident, even if the case is considered "marginal" or relatively insignificant. The activities of Jewish organizations are reflected in extensive media coverage and intentions to influence public opinion regarding antisemitism.

The handling of the coronavirus crisis by the state authorities provoked public criticism and received extensive media coverage.³⁶⁰ This criticism is also reflected in the increase in the number of antisemitic incidents, including demonstrations against the ongoing closure in which conspiracy theories were expressed about a Jewish connection to the virus. Accusations that the lockdown was intended to strengthen Jewish control of the economy, that Jews control vaccines, that Jews are trying to take advantage of the crisis to establish a New World Order, that George Soros "the Jew" is behind the crisis, etc., were expressed in demonstrations, graffiti, and vandalism incidents.³⁶¹

[The Attack on the AMIA Building in Argentina](#)

Today, more than 25 years after the attack on the AMIA Jewish community building in 1994, there have been no convictions and none of the perpetrators found themselves behind bars, despite repeated public statements by all governments about their commitment to fight for justice. The ongoing failure to investigate the attack, the involvement of the authorities, the role of the Iranian government, and the mysterious death of the Jewish prosecutor who investigated the case, Alberto Nissman, are all evidence of a systemic failure in dealing with an affair that continues to affect the Jewish community and their sense of security.

[The Rise of the Evangelic Church](#)

The strengthening process of the Evangelical movement in Latina American countries, with an emphasis on the countries mentioned above, is another noteworthy phenomenon. This movement, which holds pro-Israel positions, is a counterweight to the phenomena of New Antisemitism and is responsible, among other things, for promoting a positive public opinion towards the Jewish communities and the State of Israel throughout the Spanish speaking world. A particularly notable case is the current president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, who belongs to the movement, and is known for his positive attitude toward the State of Israel and the Jewish community in his country.

2.2 Second Group

This group consists of countries where the source of antisemitism is institutional or in organized groups with significant political power. The most prominent country in this context is Venezuela.

³⁵⁹ See detailed antisemitic cases in the report below.

³⁶⁰ <https://bit.ly/3a1o54N>.

³⁶¹ See detailed antisemitic cases in the report below.

The Chavist Venezuelan government's relations and ties with the Shiite and Iranian Islamic world shaped the internal and foreign policy that the government has pursued for years and is characterized by a clear anti-Zionist tone. As a result, the Venezuelan government is spreading antisemitic rhetoric throughout Spanish-speaking countries under the guise of anti-Zionist or anti-imperialist policies.³⁶²

Nicolas Maduro's government is characterized by general corruption and is accused of taking part in international organized crime, drug trafficking, authorization to Iranian groups to operate in the country's territory alongside with South American guerrilla organizations, close ties with Hezbollah (which uses Venezuela as a base for money laundering), and the illegal sale and issuance of official Venezuelan travel documents to citizens from Arab countries.³⁶³

Since Hugo Chavez was elected president of Venezuela in 1998, state antisemitism has grown steadily and peaked in January 2009, when diplomatic relations with Israel were canceled, and in late May 2010, as part of the Marmara events when the president cursed the State of Israel live on state television when relations between the two countries have reached an unprecedented low. When Maduro was appointed president after Chavez's death, he continued the policies marked by his predecessor.³⁶⁴ Senior members of the regime, including Maduro himself, Vice President Delcy Rodriguez, Communications Minister Jorge Rodriguez, and Foreign Minister Jorge Arianza, have promoted antisemitic campaigns on social media. Tarek El-Aissami (former vice president of Venezuela who is of Syrian descent) was accused of drug trafficking by the United States and is considered to be the link between Hezbollah and the Venezuelan government. He is facing an international arrest warrant issued by the U.S. government. El-Aissami also was accused by Former Venezuelan diplomats and U.S. Senator Mark Rubio of being responsible for the trade and issuing of Venezuelan ID cards and passports to members of the Hezbollah terrorist organization. Some of these included diplomatic passports which allow free movement around the world under the protection and diplomatic immunity of the Venezuelan government.³⁶⁵

It is important mention the second most influential person in the Venezuelan regime, Diosadado Cabello, a powerful politician and president of the unrecognized National Constituent Assembly (not recognized by some 60 countries around the world). Cabello uses antisemitic rhetoric in his television programs, accusing anyone who opposes the regime of being of Jewish descent, or of being a "representative of Zionism." Among the people attacked by him was one of leaders of the opposition, Henrique Capriles, and the politician David Smolansky. In addition, Cabello's website uploads many articles originally from the website *Hispana TV*, an Iranian news network in Spanish with false and defamatory information against the State of Israel. In addition, it is important to

³⁶² Source preserved by the Ministry of Diaspora affairs.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ <https://cnn.it/3q1Xv10>.

mention, the Venezuelan government's news portal *TELESUR*, which also regularly publishes antisemitic articles, including articles originating from the Iranian Broadcasting Authority.

Institutional antisemitism in Latin America is strongly linked to Palestinian diplomacy: The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses its embassies across the continent to disseminate anti-Zionist content and hosts events with a distinctly antisemitic nature. This can be seen on social media in profiles managed by the Palestinian embassies. The Venezuelan regime maintains close ties with the Palestinian Authority and their embassy in Caracas.

Linda Sobeh Ali, the last Palestinian ambassador to Caracas, served for a long time as a minister in Maduro's cabinet. Ali used the state facilities freely and frequently took an active part in the activities of the Venezuelan government.³⁶⁶ It is important to mention that this ambassador was previously expelled from Canada by the Canadian government due to antisemitic tweets she posted on social media, but was welcomed as the official representative of the Palestinian Authority in Caracas.³⁶⁷ Over the last few years, the Venezuelan Jewish community has largely migrated out of the country. Direct factors for this include the tense political atmosphere, an increase in public antisemitic rhetoric, the difficult economic situation, and the rise in crime. Today it can be said that the Jewish community in Venezuela is in decline, and without significant political change, there is a real fear for its future.³⁶⁸

Another country that belongs to this group is Chile. The phenomenon of antisemitism in Chile is not similar to other countries in the Spanish-speaking region. This phenomenon has undergone a number of "changes" in recent decades. In the mid-20th century, the most prevalent antisemitic discourse in the country was racist discourse influenced by German immigration. After World War II, this discourse declined and today the main antisemitic discourse is centered around anti-Israel and anti-Zionist rhetoric, alongside Islamist and Christian elements which originated in the Middle East. The main factor responsible for this is the Middle Eastern immigrant community led by the large Palestinian community, which contains over 150,000 Palestinian immigrants and residents of Chile; the largest Palestinian community in the world outside the Middle East.

The Palestinian community in Chile is characterized by a significant social and political presence, many public and key figures, cultural clubs, and journalists. All of these leave their mark on the Chilean public discourse, which is expressed in a distinctly antisemitic tone under the guise of anti-Zionist activity. Moreover, the relatively small Jewish community (less than 1% of the total population) has often found itself targeted by the Palestinian community, which sees them as responsible for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

³⁶⁶ Source preserved by the Ministry of Diaspora affairs.

³⁶⁷ <https://tgam.ca/3oYPngw>.

³⁶⁸ Source preserved by the Ministry of Diaspora affairs.

2.3 Third Group

This group, as mentioned, includes countries where the Jewish community is relatively small, or countries where the number of incidents are insignificant. It includes Peru, Costa Rica, Paraguay, and Ecuador. In these countries, the antisemitic incidents reported in general and in the past year have been few and were manifested mainly as Classical Antisemitism or as anti-Israel activity.

3. Insights

The new and most central feature in the context of antisemitism in the Spanish-speaking region in 2020 was the discourse surrounding the coronavirus crisis. The discourse was characterized by an increase in the number of conspiracy theories about a Jewish connection to the virus, the vaccine, and the exploitation of the economic crisis. The other antisemitic phenomena described in this report are continuing trends from previous years. Special attention should be paid to antisemitic discourse by government officials, such as those by senior Venezuelans, and to some of the continent's socialist movements responsible for spreading a distinctly antisemitic discourse under the guise of popular support for the Palestinian cause. This characteristic can be found throughout the whole Spanish-speaking region and is common in almost every country.

4. Main Antisemitic Incidents in 2020

April - Argentina: Actuality report blames Israel and US "rich people" for corona virus. During C5N's actuality program, a channel ideologically linked with the Argentine government, a reporter claimed that "the rich of the world from Israel, the United States, and Europe control their life and are responsible for spreading the coronavirus."

April - Brazil: 11 high school students used the Nazi salute to express support for the candidacy of another student to be their spokesman. The incident took place at a high school in the northern city of Recife. The students were suspended from school for a week.

May - Venezuela: In an article on the Venezuelan government news portal, Israel is mentioned as a "country that commits genocide" together with Holocaust denial. An article about Jerusalem in the Venezuelan news portal *TELESUR* stated that Israel is a terrorist country that commits genocide and wants to purge Jerusalem of an Islamic presence.

May - Argentina: Controversy surrounding government plan to launch new banknote with former minister who supported the Nazi regime. There has been a wave of public criticism in Argentina over the government's desire to commemorate a former minister in a new \$5,000 peso bill. The former health minister in General Peron's government in the 1950s, Ramon Carillo, was known as a supporter of the Nazi regime.

May - Brazil: The President of Parliament has received antisemitic remarks on social network. The Jewish chairman of the Brazilian Parliament, Davi Alcolumbre, was harassed with antisemitic remarks posted to his Facebook profile. One of the comments said, "we hope that God will continue to enlighten President Bolsonaro even though he now has a Jew as Chairman of Parliament."

June - Argentina: Antisemitic Slogans During Protests Against Quarantine Guidelines in Buenos Aires. During an anti-quarantine demonstration marking 100 days of lockdown, signs with slogans containing conspiracy theories and antisemitic and anti-Zionist sentiments were displayed. Some examples included “the Zionists and the Jews control the media which spread fear of the Coronavirus,” and “the Jews control the world.”

June - Argentina: Antisemitic “zoombombers” target Zionist organization during virtual conference. During a Zoom conference attended by approximately 150 participants regarding Aliyah, a number of users infiltrated the video chat and presented flags with swastikas while masturbating in front of the camera.

June - Argentina: Newspaper editor compares Zionism to Nazism and Stalinism. Argentine journalist Federico Torpe found himself under fire after publishing an article comparing Nazism to Zionism just days after the Argentine government officially adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

June - Venezuela: Holocaust denier appointed senior government position. On June 19th, Nicolas Maduro’s government appointed the former Rector of the Central University of Venezuela, Luis Fuenmayor Toro, to a key role in the National Electoral Council.

June - Brazil: Pastor calls for second Holocaust during church sermon in Rio de Janeiro. On June 21st, Topirni da Hora Lurdes, an Evangelical priest, stated during his sermon that what happened during World War II should be repeated. The pastor stated that Jews should be slaughtered because they left their faith and separated from the rest of the nations. He also claimed that the Jews should be destroyed like worms and he called on God to repeat what he did during World War II.

July - Uruguay: Antisemitic remarks published in an editorial in *VERDAD*. The article, which deals with the internal political situation in Uruguay, stated that Uruguayan President Lacalle Pou does not respond to the demands of the Uruguayan people, but to those who really control the country: the Jews.

July - Argentina: Professor shares antisemitic remarks during virtual lecture at university in Cordoba. During a virtual lecture on International Politics given on July 3rd, Professor Esteban Lizondo made antisemitic remarks. A student recorded it and presented a complaint to the Federation of Jewish Communities in Argentina. The professor stated that the State of Israel was established by the Zionist lobby in exchange for money, and that he will give a bonus to students who can give him an example of a poor Jew. In addition, the professor noted that the Germans killed Jews because they envied their wealth during the economic crisis of the 1920s.

July - Argentina: The vice president’s daughter posted a picture on Instagram of Leila Khaled holding a weapon. Florencia Kirchner, daughter of Argentine Vice President Christina Fernandez, posted a photo of Palestinian terrorist Leila Khaled brandishing a weapon on her Instagram account and invited her followers to read Khaled’s story. The post was censored by Instagram.

July - Uruguay: Disagreement over the possible auctioning of Nazi memorabilia. In 2006, a private delegation salvaged a Nazi ship’s figurehead which features a swastika and Nazi Eagle from the La Plata River. The figurehead belonged to the battleship “Admiral Graf Spee,” which sank close to the port of Montevideo after the epic “Battle of the River Plate,” which took place in December 1939. The massive piece is expected to be sold in auction. The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Latin America called on the Uruguayan government to cancel the expected auction.

August - Argentina: Antisemitic posters hung throughout the city of Neuquén. On August 22nd, antisemitic posters were displayed in the city of Neuquén, the capital of the province of Neuquén, located in the Argentine Patagonia. The posters claimed Jews are responsible for “the Corona lie” in order to establish a worldwide Jewish dictatorship.

August - Argentina: Frente de Todos’ offices targeted with antisemitic graffiti in Bahia Blanca, Buenos Aires. On August 30th, antisemitic graffiti was tagged on the front offices of the Frente de Todos Party, which is the government’s party, and throughout additional areas of Bahia Blanca, which is located in the province of Buenos Aires. The graffiti writing changed the letter ‘o’ in the word ‘Todos’ to the Star of David, and additional slogans read “No to a New World Order.”

August - Venezuela: Venezuelan politician posts antisemitic tweet. On August 6th, following the explosion at the port of Beirut, the Venezuelan government expressed their solidarity with the Lebanese people on social networks. The secretary of the Venezuelan Constituent Assembly Fidel Vazques I., retweeted the government’s post, tagged Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, and added the following text to the tweet: “It all smells like the United States and Israel. We in Venezuela suffered terrorist attacks by Venezuelans who work for the Empire and understand these matters.”

September - Argentina: Antisemitic parade in the city of Córdoba. On September 17th, protests took place throughout the country in response to the current severe economic crisis caused by the five-month coronavirus lockdown. During the protests in Córdoba, a parade by the “Patriarcado Unido Argentino” (the Argentine United Patriarchate, a marginal militaristic organization) was held. Antisemitic caricatures and pictures of Argentine Jews were displayed, along with accusations that Jews are attempting to establish a “New World Order” and are responsible for the ongoing coronavirus closures.

September - Argentina: Antisemitic graffiti on billboards advertising Jewish radio reporter and tv programs. On September 3rd, the Association of Jewish Communities in Argentina (DAIA) condemned the vandalism on posters advertising a radio program hosted by veteran Jewish reporter Eduardo Feinman. The poster was vandalized with swastikas, threats, and the word Nazi. Eduardo Feinman is a highly popular radio and television reporter in Argentina.

September - Mexico: Indignation following social media post of Nazi flags hanging at Volkswagen offices. On September 8th, after a picture posted on Twitter depicted a Nazi-era photo hanging on the wall at a Volkswagen car dealership in Coyoacan, and following condemnation from the Wiesenthal Center, the German car company condemned the case and stated that this doesn’t comply with the company’s policy and that actions will be taken.

September - Argentina: Tombstones smashed in the Jewish cemetery in Rosario. A number of gravestones in the new Jewish cemetery in the city of Rosario were smashed in what appeared to be a deliberate act.

October - Chile: Antisemitic signs in a demonstration against the new constitution. During a protest surrounding the referendum on a new constitution in Las Condes, Santiago, protesters showed up wearing t-shirts with slogans against Israel and performed the Nazi salute. Some of the protesters were equipped with posters supporting President Donald Trump and posters against “illegal immigration” and communism.

October - Brazil: Man with infamous swastika pool expelled from his political party. History professor Wanderley Pugliesi first made headlines in 2014, when it was discovered that he had an enormous swastika tiled into his backyard pool in rural southern Brazil. Pugliesi, 58, named his son Adolf, and police seized a trove of Nazi-related materials from him in 1994. Now he is back in the news after attempting to run for a seat on his local town council. The Liberal Party that he is affiliated with kicked him out last week “for not ideologically agreeing with the affiliate.”

October - Chile: Jewish community condemns Palestinian ambassador’s statements praising terrorism & violence. Along with the Jewish community, the Israeli Ambassador to Chile, Marina Rosenberg, condemned the statements of the Palestinian representative in the country, Imad Nabil Jadaa, in which he justified terrorism and legitimized violence during a virtual meeting held by the Chilean Senate to analyze the situation in Palestine. The controversial statements were made as Ambassador Jada described Palestinians carrying out terrorist attacks against the Israeli population as “good” and “martyrs,” and accused the Jewish community in Chile of “dual loyalty” for its relations with the State of Israel.

November - Spain: Antisemitic graffiti on the streets of Barcelona. Following protests and disturbances due to the last lockdown in Barcelona, antisemitic graffiti appeared near the Old City in the same area where most of the shops owned by Jews are located.

November - Venezuela: Famous singer wears Nazi military uniform while accepting medal from the Venezuelan army. The pictures of rocker Paul Gillman receiving a medal from the Venezuelan army while wearing a German imperial army uniform and a face mask with the German Iron Cross went viral on social media very quickly, especially because none of the military personnel who attended the ceremony condemned nor commented on the act.

IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism

In the spirit of the Stockholm Declaration that states: “With humanity still scarred by ...antisemitism and xenophobia the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils” the committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial called the IHRA Plenary in Budapest 2015 to adopt the following working definition of antisemitism.

On 26 May 2016, the Plenary in Bucharest decided to:

Adopt the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.

- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.



משרד התפוצות

יוצרים עתיד יהודי משותף

Ministry of Diaspora Affairs

Creating a common Jewish future